

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

NUMBER

162

Interview with  
B. D. Fillmore  
October 9, 1973

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas  
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello  
Terms of Use: Open  
Approved: B. D. Fillmore  
Date: 10-9-73

Copyright ©2016

**THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS  
IN THE CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS**

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without permission in writing from the Director of the Oral History Program or the University Archivist, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas 76203

Oral History Collection

Mr. B. D. Fillmore

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Date: October 9, 1973

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. B. D. Fillmore for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 9, 1973, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Fillmore in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Mr. Fillmore was a member of the so-called "Lost Battalion" and was captured on the island of Java in March of 1942 and subsequently spent the duration of the war in various Japanese prisoner-of-war camps.

Mr. Fillmore, to begin this interview, would you very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself? In other words, would you tell me where you were born, when you were born, your education, your present occupation, things of that nature. Just be very brief.

Mr. Fillmore: I was born in Iowa. I moved to Jacksboro, Texas, oh, about when I was three or four years old.

Marcello: When were you born?

Fillmore: January 31, 1920. My father was a doctor. We lived in Jacksboro up until 1939. I went to school at A & M to a year and started my second year. I was in the National Guard at that time. They were going to mobilize the National Guard, so I quit school. About that time the National Guard was mobilized.

Marcello: Why did you enter the National Guard? Was there any special reason?

Fillmore: Well, it was a local group, a lot of friends, and you got two weeks down on the coast of Louisiana. You picked up a little extra change.

Marcello: I gather that the National Guard at that time was a little bit like a social organization of sorts. Would that be the case? You mentioned that your friends joined and . . .

Fillmore: Well, basically I guess that's about right.

Marcello: Now the National Guard unit that you were a part of was attached to the 36th Division, isn't that correct, at first?

Fillmore: That's correct.

Marcello: Then later on, as I recall, I guess it was . . . was it in 1941, that the square divisions were changed into

the triangular divisions, and as a result, they lopped off the group that you were a member of.

Fillmore: We were lopped off, I know. I don't know whether it was at that time that they changed it from a square to a triangular, but when we left, it was a square division. About that time, I guess, maybe that's the reason they lopped it off.

Marcello: Would you identify your unit in full?

Fillmore: It was Battery F, 131st Field Artillery.

Marcello: I recall that in November of 1941, your unit underwent some training at Camp Bowie. Do you remember anything at all about that training that took place there?

Fillmore: Well, it was just . . . I guess . . .

Marcello: Was it rather routine?

Fillmore: Just rather routine--close order drill, field exercises, just routine.

Marcello: Well, this was an artillery unit, isn't that correct?

Fillmore: That's correct.

Marcello: Did you undergo very much training with actual artillery and this sort of thing?

Fillmore: As far as firing, not much.

Marcello: There wasn't very much equipment available, I don't think.

- Fillmore: There wasn't much equipment. I believe the field pieces we had were French seventy-five's, Model 1897, which they had removed the wooden wheels and put on pneumatic wheels.
- Marcello: At the time that you underwent this training at Camp Bowie in November of 1941, did you really think that the country would be going into war?
- Fillmore: I thought about that for some time, and I had a hunch that it'd happen before too long.
- Marcello: But I'll bet you were giving most of your attention toward Europe, rather than the Far East. Is that a safe assumption?
- Fillmore: No, in my particular case I wasn't.
- Marcello: How come?
- Fillmore: Well, they had trouble over in China, you know, and the Panay and the . . . oh, just what you'd read out of the newspapers and magazines. But the European situation was there, too. But I thought maybe it was coming sooner or later.
- Marcello: How old did you say you were? When were you born?
- Fillmore: In 1920.
- Marcello: That means that in 1941 you were just somewhere around twenty or twenty-one years of age.

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: Did you keep abreast pretty closely with world events at that time?

Fillmore: Tried to. I remember, oh, I think it was second year down at A & M when I started, why, I was going across the campus one day to class. At that time, everybody there was military. It was strictly a military school. There was about ten Japanese standing in front of this building, like they do on tours, cameras and everything. Well, it dawned on me later on they were probably around there snooping around to see what was going on.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you learned that your unit was going to go to the Philippine Islands?

Fillmore: I thought it'd be pretty good experience.

Marcello: Why was that?

Fillmore: Well, at that time, I imagine we'd figure we'd probably be gone for a year and a half, maybe two. It was a good chance to see a little country and have a good time, and I just liked to travel.

Marcello: I gather that the Philippines were considered pretty good duty in peacetime.

Fillmore: I expect it probably was.

Marcello: This is what I gather in talking to the people who were

later captured at Corregidor and on Bataan. They said that living in the Philippines during peacetime was a very, very pleasant experience. In fact, most of them say that living anyplace in the Far East during those prewar years was a pretty pleasant experience, whether it was in China or the Hawaiian Islands or wherever it might be.

Fillmore: I expect that's probably right.

Marcello: As I recall, you left from San Francisco, isn't that correct?

Fillmore: Correct.

Marcello: You left on the USS Republic?

Fillmore: Correct.

Marcello: You were a part of what was called Operation PLUM or that was the code name for your operation.

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: Is there anything eventful that happened during your trip between San Francisco and the Hawaiian Islands? I know you did stop at Honolulu quite briefly, very, very briefly.

Fillmore: Just overnight.

Marcello: How did an old Texas boy take to sailing across the ocean?



Fillmore: Well, it suited me all right. There's some of them that didn't do too well.

Marcello: I gather you didn't get seasick then.

Fillmore: No, no.

Marcello: When you got to Pearl Harbor or when you got to Honolulu, did you get a chance to get off the ship and look around at all?

Fillmore: Just, I think, three or four hours, something like that.

Marcello: Did you notice any extraordinary precautions that were being taken there to guard against a possible sneak attack by some unknown enemy?

Fillmore: Only thing I saw was when I was down on the square. I can't remember exactly where it was. Later on after the war we lived over there for five years. I believe they had a machine gun set up in one of the squares with sandbags around it. That was the only thing that I saw.

Marcello: Now I gather that you left the Hawaiian Islands, and your destination was still the Philippines. I think it was down around the Fiji Islands, was it not, when the convoy--and you were a part of a convoy--received the word of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Fillmore: It was before we hit the Fijis, I believe.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Fillmore: Well, it was kind of confusing. Since we weren't going to the Philippines, why, of course, everybody thought we was going to Australia, and we'd just get off there and spend some time there.

Marcello: I gather that very shortly after you heard the news about Pearl Harbor, your orders were changed, and you were diverted from the Philippines toward Australia.

Fillmore: That's the impression I got.

Marcello: What activity took place in this convoy after you learned about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor? Were there ever any submarine scares or anything of that nature?

Fillmore: Oh, no, I don't believe any submarine scares. Of course, they had lookouts all day and night. We pulled our shift on them. But as far as any scares, there . . . as far as I know, there was none.

Marcello: Incidentally, did you know Frank Fujita at that time?

Fillmore: No.

Marcello: I was just wondering what the reaction was toward him when it was learned that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor?

Fillmore: I didn't know him. I knew him when I saw him. But he was in a different outfit. I don't believe that anyone had any particular [animosity] or at least I didn't.

Marcello: You didn't have any particular feelings one way or the other?

Fillmore: No, that's right.

Marcello: What sort of activity did the troops engage in while you were on this ship, let's say, going from the Hawaiian Islands over toward Australia. Was there anything very much that you did other than stand watch?

Fillmore: Oh, we scrubbed the deck down once in awhile, stand watch, and do a little exercise every day.

Marcello: In other words, it was rather routine duty.

Fillmore: Rather routine, yes.

Marcello: Okay, so I gather you landed at Brisbane, Australia, somewhere around the 21st of December in 1941.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Now what did you do after you landed in Brisbane?

Fillmore: We got off the ship, and they marched us over to a race track. I can't remember the name of the race track now.

Marcello: It was the Ascot Race Track, I think.

Fillmore: Anyway, that's where we stayed while we were in Australia.

Marcello: What did you do after you got to the race track?

Fillmore: About the same thing.

Marcello: You just sat around and waited?

Fillmore: We just sat around and waited.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did you receive from the  
Australians?

Fillmore: Very nice.

Marcello: In what way?

Fillmore: Oh, they'd take you out to their house for dinner or  
a meal. Or you'd go to town, and the Australians  
would buy you a beer. They treated us real nice.

Marcello: I gather there was a pretty close relationship, a  
very friendly relationship, between the Australians  
and the Americans.

Fillmore: There was.

Marcello: In fact, I guess these were the first Americans that  
had ever landed in Australia--the first American troops.

Fillmore: I imagine that's about right. There might have been  
some Navy people. But so far as Army personnel, I  
believe that we were probably the first ones.

Marcello: Did you undergo any sort of training or orientation  
or anything at all while you were in Brisbane?

Fillmore: No, I don't believe we did.

Marcello: Incidentally, what was your particular function in your unit?

Fillmore: I was a gunnery corporal.

Marcello: In other words, you were connected to one of the artillery pieces or attached with one of the artillery pieces?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Okay, how long did you remain in Brisbane altogether? I gather it must have just been a matter of weeks, was it not?

Fillmore: About a week or ten days or maybe two weeks at the most, I'd say.

Marcello: Incidentally, did you believe that this war would be a rather short one, or did you expect already that it would be one of pretty long duration?

Fillmore: Well, I really didn't know too much about it at that time. But later on, why, I figured it would be quite a skirmish.

Marcello: What were your impressions of the Japanese at this time?

Fillmore: Well, about the only things that I knew were what you read in the papers--about the atrocities they were committing, and pictures in the paper of having the

beheadings--material like that. I knew they were a pretty rugged bunch.

Marcello: Did you usually think of them as perhaps being the typical small individual with the thick, horn-rimmed glasses and the buck teeth and the smile and this sort of thing. Did you usually think of the Japanese as he was usually pictured in the usual cartoon?

Fillmore: That's probably about right.

Marcello: Did you have any idea what the extent of the damage was at Pearl Harbor?

Fillmore: No.

Marcello: I would assume that had you known how badly Pearl Harbor had been hit, this may have told you something about how long the war was going to last.

Fillmore: I imagine that's a pretty good statement.

Marcello: Okay, so you left Brisbane after a very, very short stay at the race track. Where were you headed for at that point? Were you on your way to the Philippines again before they shifted you to Java, or did you go right across to Java?

Fillmore: No, I imagine we were headed right to Java.

Marcello: I see.

Fillmore: We left there, and then we stopped at Darwin and unloaded some radio gear, I imagine.

Marcello: That is, you went from Brisbane to Port Darwin?

Fillmore: Right, and then from there up to Java.

Marcello: Okay, you landed at Surabaya, isn't that correct?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: How long did this trip take? Was it just a matter of days?

Fillmore: I'd say that it may have been a day short a week, something like that.

Marcello: Were there ever any sort of war scares on this particular trip that you recall? Any submarine scares or did you cite any Japanese airplanes or warships or anything of that nature?

Fillmore: No. Not any airplanes. I think we may have had a submarine scare or two.

Marcello: Okay, so you got to Java somewhere around January 11, 1942, I believe it was, and you landed in Surabaya. Now just coming in on the ship, what did Surabaya and the surrounding countryside look like to you? What were your impressions of it?

Fillmore: Well, let's see. I can't remember too much about the scenery at that time or now, other than it looked like a tropical island.

Marcello: Surabaya itself was a pretty big city, was it not?

Fillmore: A pretty big city.

Marcello: Well, what happened when you got to Surabaya?

Fillmore: We unloaded there and got on a train and went up to Malang.

Marcello: Why did they send you up to Malang?

Fillmore: Well, there was an airfield on the outskirts of Malang. I presume they sent us up there to give some protection for the air field.

Marcello: Is this the field where the 6th, 7th, and 19th Bomb Groups eventually landed?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: These were the groups from the Philippines, isn't that correct--what was left from the groups in the Philippines. What sort of activity did you undergo up at Malang?

Fillmore: Guard duty, and I worked over at one of the hangers patching up planes--the small holes--and loading bombs in planes.

Marcello: In other words, your unit was working very, very closely with the bomb groups that were at this field at Malang.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Quite obviously, the Japanese hadn't landed or anything yet, so there wouldn't have been too much use for using



your artillery at this particular point yet.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What sort of a relationship did you have with the Dutch at this time?

Fillmore: Seemed to be pretty good. We didn't see too many of them. There at one time the barracks we were staying in, I imagine they vacated that so we could move in.

Marcello: What sort of attitude did the Dutch have toward the war? Did they really seem like they were willing to fight? Or did they seem to think that if they didn't fight perhaps the Japanese wouldn't be too tough on them later on. What sort of an attitude did you detect on the part of the Dutch toward the whole war?

Fillmore: Well, at that time, I really didn't know because I didn't talk to any of them. They always seemed to be busy doing something. But then as time went on, why, later on, it seemed like they were just kind of marking time or something.

Marcello: What sort of a routine did you have at this air base? Did it just amount mainly to perhaps pulling some guard duty and repairing some of the holes in the airplanes and things of this nature?

Fillmore: That's what it amounted to.

Marcello: Did you ever load bombs or . . .

Fillmore: Yes.

Marcello: . . . or reload the guns or things of that nature?

Fillmore: No, I was loading bombs most of the time.

Marcello: How long was it before you experienced your first air raids here at this field?

Fillmore: The first one we got on February 3rd.

Marcello: What was it like? Describe what it was like during that first air raid. Now this would have been your first time under fire, isn't that correct?

Fillmore: That's right. Well, it really didn't . . . of course, the Dutch said that they had a fool-proof air raid system. Always had plenty of time to get away. When they came in that first time, why, it didn't take long to figure out what was going on. Of course, it kind of scares everybody. But after the first one, why, you always kind of walked around with one eye up in the air.

Marcello: How many planes came over during this first raid? Was it more than twenty or less than twenty?

Fillmore: No, I'd say about seventeen. It was an odd number of some kind.

Marcello: Were these two-engine bombers?

Fillmore: Two-engine bombers. Then the other planes, the Zeros, they'd come in.

Marcello: They'd strafe?

Fillmore: They'd come in and strafe.

Marcello: What sort of resistance did the airfield put up?

Fillmore: Not too much during the first one because nobody was ready for it. Then later on, why, people started getting shooting guns out of the wrecked planes and setting up their own anti-aircraft deal. Then it got to where it was . . . after about the second or third one, why, you got in your hole, and you kind of stayed because everybody was shooting at everything.

Marcello: Anything that moved.

Fillmore: Yes (chuckle).

Marcello: You mentioned that you took the guns out of the wrecked planes. I gather that this first raid caught a few planes on the ground.

Fillmore: It did.

Marcello: How much damage was done during this initial raid?

Fillmore: Well, the bombers didn't do much. A few bombs hit around the barracks and knocked the roof off. It didn't do much. The strafing planes are the ones that hit the airfield and shot up the planes. Of course,

they'd catch on fire, and if one of them would be loaded with bombs, it'd make a pretty good noise.

Marcello: I've also heard it said that the anti-aircraft weapons that were available at this base were no match for the Japanese planes in that the Japanese planes were flying too high, that the anti-aircraft weapons couldn't reach the Japanese planes.

Fillmore: Oh, that's right, the bombers they couldn't. But the British had some antiaircraft guns around there and bofor guns. I imagine it was about a thirty millimeter gun or something--thirty-seven, something like that. But I don't believe they ever shot one of those Zeros down.

Marcello: How many of these air raids were you subjected to while you were at this base?

Fillmore: I believe about four. Four or five.

Marcello: Do you ever get used to them?

Fillmore: Oh, well, if you knew they were coming, why, you would get used to it.

Marcello: What was your usual procedure or your usual routine when you did know that one was coming or when you saw the planes coming?

Fillmore: You had a hole out in the perimeter of the camp. If you knew it was coming, you went and you jumped in your

hole. But if you didn't, why, you got in the closest ditch that was available.

Marcello: Now at this point yet, were you . . . well, no, at this point yet you had not hooked up or linked up with any of the Australian units on Java, had you?

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: You had not at this point yet?

Fillmore: Had not.

Marcello: As I recall, on February 27, 1942, the bomb groups left Java. I would assume they headed for Australia. Now what did this do to the morale of you and your unit? Here they were leaving, going to a place that was obviously a little bit safer than Java. It was probably quite evident the Japanese were going to land on Java sooner or later. What did this do for your morale when here these bomb groups were leaving and you were still staying?

Fillmore: Well, it left you kind of holding the bag, I'd say. We figured, or I imagine most everybody figured, it was going to get a little rougher before it got better.

Marcello: Did you have hopes that you were still going to be taken off the island?

Fillmore: Oh, still had hopes.

Marcello: Why was it that you were not evacuated from the island with the bomb groups or shortly thereafter?

Fillmore: Well, the best information I can gather is that the Houston was going to pick us up on the south coast of Java, which never did make it around there.

Marcello: The Japanese eventually sank the USS Houston, and you eventually linked up with some of those people, I guess, in Bicycle Camp.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Well, on March 9, 1942 . . . well, let me just go back just a little bit. Do you recall when the Japanese landed on Java? It was on March 9, 1942, that orders came down that you were to surrender. But do you recall approximately when it was that the Japanese landed on Java?

Fillmore: Oh, must have landed around the first.

Marcello: Around the 1st of March?

Fillmore: I imagine, something like that.

Marcello: What contact did you have with the Japanese after they landed? Was there any?

Fillmore: There was some contact on the west end of Java. I guess the Australians had an infantry or machine gun battalion or something. We were artillery, and we were supposed to give them artillery support.

Marcello: You were working closely with the Australians at this point?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Okay, this was the so-called "Black Force," I believe, was it not?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: So you were giving them support? Well, what sort of contact did you have like some skirmishes with the Japanese here at the west end of the island?

Fillmore: Well, we didn't have too much along this river. I can't remember the name of the river. There was a little town. I don't know whether the town was \_\_\_\_\_ or the river was the \_\_\_\_\_. But that didn't last too long. I suspect maybe three days.

Marcello: You mean that you were there?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: But up until this point, you really never had any close contact with the Japanese.

Fillmore: No, other than at the airfield.

Marcello: Did you ever have any contact at all with the Japanese up until the time that you surrendered?

Fillmore: No. You mean . . .

Marcello: That is . . . were you in any . . . did you ever engage in any combat with the Japanese up until the time that

you surrendered.

Fillmore: No. I mean, we fired some artillery at them. But as far as seeing them like sitting like I am with you, no.

Marcello: In other words, you were never really that close that you really observed any of the Japanese troops or their activities or things of this nature.

Fillmore: Right, where I was. There's some of them did. They were down there. I guess they were close enough they could see them moving around.

Marcello: Okay, so the Japanese landed around the 1st of March. You had very little contact with them. Finally, on the 9th of March, 1942, orders came down that you were supposed to surrender.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard that you were going to surrender, that you were ordered to surrender?

Fillmore: Oh, I thought the bottom had just about fell out. I figured, "Well, that was about it."

Marcello: Did you ever entertain the idea of heading into the hills?

Fillmore: No, I didn't.

Marcello: Why not?

Fillmore: Well, I don't believe you could have gone too far because behind every tree there was somebody living or something.



The Japanese had a pretty good espionage ring going there, and I imagine they'd have probably picked you up in short order. I don't know of anyone that . . . I think there's some of them who maybe tried to run off or . . . I don't believe . . . well, if there was, there was very few.

Marcello: So far as I know, there were none that really headed for the hills. What sort of loyalty did the natives have on this island?

Fillmore: I believe they'd probably sell their own grandmother for a dollar--that's a Dutch dollar.

Marcello: Well, again, this is another reason, I think, that would have made it difficult to have fled into the hills. The natives were loyal to nobody, and like you point out, for a price, they would have certainly informed upon any Americans that might have been in the vicinity or any Americans that they had seen. Of course, since you were basically a different color from the natives, you couldn't have blended very well with the local population.

Fillmore: Right. That's right. There's only one guy that I know of . . . we were leaving there, going some place, anyway. I believe he was a cook out of D Battery.

We were going along this road in a truck and saw this guy running across this rice paddy about fifty yards from the road. We went out and got him. But he wasn't trying to run. He was just drunk. He didn't know where he was.

Marcello: Well, was he a Dutchman or American?

Fillmore: He was an American (chuckle).

Marcello: This was shortly after the orders had come down to surrender?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Well, what did you do next . . . well, let me ask you this. Had the rumor been going around that the Japanese didn't take prisoners?

Fillmore: If it did, I can't remember.

Marcello: Well, what happened next then? The orders came down to surrender. What procedure did you follow from that point?

Fillmore: Well, they told us to gather at another race track.

Marcello: Who's they? Your officers?

Fillmore: Our officers, right. We went to this race track and lined up around the track. I believe it was either that day or the next day, why, the Japanese came in . . . or the Japanese colonel came in. Our colonel

was with him, and they rode around the track. Then . . . was it that day or the next day . . . we hauled our guns and everything down to the . . . they had a schoolhouse down there, and we dumped them all down there.

Marcello: At this point yet had you come into contact with any Japanese troops?

Fillmore: No. First time I was real close to one was when we took some of our equipment down there and dumped it.

Marcello: You did meet Japanese troops when you took your equipment to this schoolhouse and dumped it?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What happened when you got down there?

Fillmore: We just dumped it and went back to the race track.

Marcello: What were your impressions of these Japanese soldiers?

Fillmore: I thought they were pretty mean looking.

Marcello: Is that right?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What gave you that particular impression?

Fillmore: Oh, they looked like they'd been out in the Army for some time. They looked like they'd been well-trained and we pretty well thought they looked rough.

Marcello: In other words, they looked like battle-seasoned troops.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Did they harass you in any way at this particular time yet?

Fillmore: No, other than just scream once in awhile. Nothing other than that.

Marcello: So you dropped off your guns at this schoolhouse, and you went back to the race track again. All this time, were you unescorted or did Japanese troops escort you?

Fillmore: I don't know. There well could have been somebody up in the lead.

Marcello: How long did you stay at this race track?

Fillmore: Not very long, maybe . . . oh, just a matter of a few minutes. Maybe fifteen or twenty minutes. Oh, at the race track?

Marcello: Right.

Fillmore: Oh, let's see. Couple days, something like that, I believe.

Marcello: What did you do so far as provisions and food and this sort of thing and shelter? Were the Japanese providing any food at this time, or were you subsisting off of whatever rations your unit still had yet?

Fillmore: I believe we were living off what we had.

Marcello: Okay, so you were there at the race track then for a

couple of days and still hadn't seen any Japanese soldiers yet to amount to anything.

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: Then what happened from there?

Fillmore: Then I believe we moved to up in some tea plantation.

Marcello: You did not go to the Bicycle Camp yet?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Okay. So they moved you to this tea plantation. Was it somewhere outside of Surabaja?

Fillmore: No, it was outside of this . . . not too far, I don't believe . . . well, let's see. I don't know. It was . . . no, I believe it was close to the race track. Is that right?

Marcello: It may be. What did you do when you got to the tea plantation?

Fillmore: The same thing. We didn't do anything there. We didn't see any Japanese. We just moved into this big processing plant, I presume that's what it was.

Marcello: Was this plantation close enough that you marched there, or did you go there by vehicles?

Fillmore: I can't answer that one.

Marcello: How long were you at this tea plantation?

Fillmore: Maybe a week.

Marcello: You really did nothing the whole time that you were there?

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: What kind of thoughts were going through your mind at this time? Was it mainly just a confused state or what?

Fillmore: Well, it might have been that. But at that time, why, I figured that if it was going to be like that for the rest of the war, it wouldn't be a bad life.

Marcello: Were you getting plenty to eat?

Fillmore: Right, we were buying a little stuff from the natives. Maybe the Japanese were furnishing some food.

Marcello: At this tea plantation, did you have any contact with the Japanese yet?

Fillmore: No.

Marcello: Okay, so you were there about a week. Then what happened from that point?

Fillmore: Then they loaded us on a train, and we went to Batavia.

Marcello: Okay, and is this where you went to the Bicycle Camp?

Fillmore: No, first we went to the port city of Batavia. Batavia is not on the coast. Tanjong Priok--we went there first.

Marcello: What did you do when you got there?

Fillmore: We marched from the railroad station over to this place.

It must have been a Dutch Army base at one time.  
Then they put us through work there--not too much.  
We weren't there long.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do at Tanjong Priok?

Fillmore: Well, we worked around the docks.

Marcello: What sort of specific things did you do around the  
docks?

Fillmore: Oh, just cleaned up the mess, mostly.

Marcello: You mean the debris of war and that sort of thing?

Fillmore: It was all . . . I guess the Dutch had burned a bunch  
of it. Maybe some of it got shelled or . . .

Marcello: So you were organized into work parties here at  
Tanjong Priok.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Were these work parties supervised by the Japanese?

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: What sort of treatment did you receive at the hands  
of the Japanese here at Tanjong Priok?

Fillmore: It really wasn't too bad. I imagine they were kind  
of curious, too, to see us, and we were about the same  
way. Then, of course, the groceries weren't the best  
in the world. There were quite a few people there  
that were Australians and British, Indians, Dutch.

I presume it was more of kind of a gathering place to start with.

Marcello: You mentioned that the food wasn't too good there. What did it consist of?

Fillmore: Well, mostly just rice and a little watered-down stew sometimes--what you could pick up on the side.

Marcello: What sort of living quarters did you have here at Tanjong Priok?

Fillmore: Well, it was just the roof and sides and the floor, and you just slept on the floor.

Marcello: Were the Japanese harassing you very much at this time physically?

Fillmore: No, not at that time they weren't.

Marcello: I would gather that this was probably because they were still preoccupied with mopping up actions, and these were also front line troops, I would gather.

Fillmore: I imagine they were.

Marcello: From everything I understand, you didn't really have a lot of trouble with the front line troops.

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: It was usually the rear echelon troops or else the Koreans that gave you all the trouble later on.

Fillmore: That's the way it came up later.



Marcello: Well, how long were you at Tanjong Priok altogether?

Fillmore: I imagine a couple of weeks. Weren't there too long.

Marcello: During most of this time you were working on the docks there?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Was this very hard, strenuous work?

Fillmore: No, it wasn't too hard. We were still in pretty good shape and managed to get along.

Marcello: From a physical standpoint, was the unit in pretty good shape at this time?

Fillmore: Pretty good shape.

Marcello: Okay, so you were there a couple of weeks at Tanjong Priok, which is the port city for Batavia. Where did you go from there?

Fillmore: Then we went to Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: Okay, this would have been probably somewhere around May of 1942. I'm not sure of the exact date, but sometime in May of 1942, probably early May of '42.

Fillmore: Probably, right.

Marcello: So you'd probably been at, well, like you point out, at Tanjong Priok for maybe somewhere around two weeks or something like that.

Fillmore: The best I can recall.

Marcello: Okay, so how did you get from Tanjong Priok to the Bicycle Camp? Did you go by vehicle or by train or did you march?

Fillmore: It wasn't by train. I can't remember that one either.

Marcello: What did Bicycle Camp look like? Describe it when you got there?

Fillmore: Well, it just looked like a bunch of long Army barracks like the Dutch have.

Marcello: Now this was an old Dutch Army camp, isn't that correct?

Fillmore: Right. Of course, they had a barbed wire fence around it by then. Oh, the barracks we were in looked more like a horse barn. It had stalls along the sides, hatches down the middle. Just stalls on both sides. Then the bathroom facilities were in another little separate building.

Marcello: Were the bathing and the toilet facilities adequate at this camp?

Fillmore: They were.

Marcello: Were the Americans segregated from the other units?

Fillmore: No, we all stayed together. The Americans stayed together, and the Australians had their . . . but you could walk back and forth.

Marcello: In other words, you had your sleeping quarters, and

they had their sleeping quarters. But let's say that during the daytime, you could probably intermingle in the middle of this camp or something of that nature.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What sort of activities did you undergo at this camp? What sort of work did you do?

Fillmore: Back down on the docks again.

Marcello: Now where were these docks?

Fillmore: At the same place.

Marcello: You were still going to the docks at Tanjong Priok?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: In other words, Tanjong Priok wasn't too far from Bicycle Camp.

Fillmore: Right. They hauled us down in trucks.

Marcello: Now were these work details voluntary, or were you forced to go on these details?

Fillmore: Well, they would say they wanted so many men to work, so you went to work.

Marcello: Actually, I would suppose you probably welcomed these details. They broke the monotony and maybe made the time go by a little bit faster.

Fillmore: Well, that's right. Then you picked up a little extra food and stuff, too, down at the docks.

Marcello: Are you implying that you stole a little extra food?

Fillmore: You might say that, yes.

Marcello: What sort of items were you likely to find by the docks?

Fillmore: Oh, mainly sweet cream and sugar. There was some canned fruit. I never did get into that. We used to get that off of the Australians. I guess they were working in the fruit section. Oh, we'd pick up nails and paraffin and stuff like that?

Marcello: What would you do with material like that?

Fillmore: Well, we'd melt the paraffin a little bit in the bottom of a pan and fry rice and stuff like that in.

Marcello: What sort of provisions did the Japanese provide at Bicycle Camp?

Fillmore: I don't know. They probably furnished the rice. Then we had some money, or the battalion had some money, and they'd split that up. Then when we got there, everybody . . . or whoever had the money, well, they'd turn it back in, and they would let one of the officers buy some food--groceries--from the local merchants.

Marcello: Did the local merchants more or less have free access to this camp?

Fillmore: I don't know. They probably met outside somewhere. Or maybe one of the officers and maybe a Japanese or two would get in a truck and go down to the local market, and they'd buy groceries and bring it back.

Marcello: Were you receiving an adequate amount of food here?

Fillmore: Yes, I believe we were. It was pretty good.

Marcello: How about meat. Did you ever get any meat?

Fillmore: Yes, we got some meat. It wasn't no steak or anything like that. It was just a little meat in the stew or something.

Marcello: Who was doing the cooking?

Fillmore: Oh, all the batteries had cooks. They probably swapped off on shifts, probably a twenty-four hour deal or just about.

Marcello: What were the attitudes of the guards at this particular camp? What sort of treatment did you receive from the guards?

Fillmore: It wasn't too bad there. It was a little bit worse than it had been in the past.

Marcello: In what way?

Fillmore: Oh, they'd come in the barracks and raise a little hell on the side. I don't know whether it was for the fun of it. If you wouldn't stand up or come to

attention when they walked in, why, they'd come down . . . then on these work parties, well, when you'd come back in, why, they'd shake you down pretty good. I know I was on one of them one time, and we came in, and I had a bunch of nails--burned nails which weren't good for anything. I had them in my mess kit. There was an Australian . . . two Australians and myself. I don't remember what they had. But they shook us down, and, of course, a mess kit with a bunch of nails in it makes a little noise anyway. Anyway, why, they got us down there by the guardhouse, and they got a bamboo pole and put it behind our knees, and we sat down on it. Oh, we stayed there, I guess, for thirty minutes, which is long enough.

Marcello: This was out in the hot sun?

Fillmore: Oh, I can't remember about that. But I know it didn't take long for your legs to go numb on you. That's the only time I'd ever had any problems with them. You were just a little more careful when you started to steal the stuff from then on, I guess.

Marcello: What sort of respect and what have you did you have to give to the guards here?

Fillmore: Quite a bit. When they'd come in, you had to stand at attention until they left.

Marcello: Suppose you encountered one of the guards outside the barracks. What procedure did you have to follow then? In other words, did you have to salute the guards? Did you have to bow to them or anything of that nature?

Fillmore: Sometimes we had to bow to them.

Marcello: You mentioned sometimes?

Fillmore: Well, sometimes. It depends on where you were. If you were on a work party going somewhere, you didn't. But sometimes you did.

Marcello: What would happen if you forgot to bow?

Fillmore: Well, it seemed like I always remembered.

Marcello: Did you have to go through this procedure even with the lowest private in the Japanese Army?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that from time to time they would come through the barracks. How closely would they inspect the barracks?

Fillmore: While I was there, I don't know whether they might have come by while you was off at work, but not too much. They'd just come in and look around--not too close.

Marcello: Did they expect you to keep the barracks clean? Or

was this something they left entirely up to your own officers?

Fillmore: I imagine they probably expected us to keep it clean. We did keep it clean. They were a fairly clean bunch. I know they made us shave all of our hair off there at Bicycle Camp.

Marcello: You mean a lot of the men had grown beards and things of that nature?

Fillmore: Well, just most of them had not long hair, but had some hair on their head. But it all had to go.

Marcello: They all just give you this short, close-cropped haircut?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Now were you still being guarded at this camp by Japanese guards, or did you encounter the Korean guards at this camp?

Fillmore: No, I believe they were still Japanese.

Marcello: This probably explains why the treatment wasn't exactly too harsh at this point, I would imagine.

Fillmore: I imagine.

Marcello: Did anybody ever entertain any ideas of escaping here at Bicycle Camp?

Fillmore: Not that I know of.

Marcello: On the other hand, did the Japanese lay down any sort



of rules, or did they issue any threats in case anybody did escape?

Fillmore: I believe they made us sign a statement saying we wouldn't escape, and if we did, they'd cut our groceries off. They wouldn't sign it, so they cut the groceries off. Then the colonel says, "Well, it didn't make any difference whether you escaped or not. But go ahead and sign it because the groceries are getting pretty scarce."

Marcello: In other words, they circulated this pledge or document--written statement, I suppose would be a good way to describe it--and this was a pledge that you were to sign, and in it you promised that you would not escape.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: If you did escape, they would cut off your food?

Fillmore: No, I believe they cut off our food because we didn't sign it.

Marcello: I see.

Fillmore: Then they lowered the rations until they did sign it.

Marcello: In other words, how come you didn't sign it? Because it was contrary to the Geneva Convention or something of that nature?

Fillmore: I imagine that's right.

Marcello: Then you say as a result, they decided to cut off the food.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Then when they did that, finally there was no recourse but to sign this document.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: You were talking about the colonel. Is this Colonel Tharp?

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: I see. Did you have very much contact with him, or did you get to see him very often?

Fillmore: Saw him pretty regular.

Marcello: What sort of a man was he?

Fillmore: He seemed to me like a fairly nice fellow.

Marcello: What was discipline like in this camp? Were you still obeying your officers and this sort of thing yet?

Fillmore: Right. Discipline was all right.

Marcello: Was there anything the officers could do to maintain discipline? How could they enforce discipline?

Fillmore: Well, I don't know. There may have been a case or two where somebody got out of line, but I can't recall it.

Marcello: I would assume that disciplinary action was rather a rare thing because everybody, I think, assumed by this

time that if you didn't have discipline, you weren't going to survive.

Fillmore: That's right. Everybody was in the same boat, and they had to get along.

Marcello: At this particular stage yet--that is, while you were in Bicycle Camp--were you still maintaining a fairly constant weight, or were you losing weight?

Fillmore: No, you may have lost a little bit, but not much.

Marcello: In other words, here again, would it be safe to say that had you remained in Bicycle Camp for the duration of the war, that your tenure as a prisoner wouldn't have been too bad a one?

Fillmore: I'd say that would be a good statement.

Marcello: It wasn't too bad.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: It wasn't good but it wasn't bad.

Fillmore: It wasn't bad.

Marcello: What did you do for recreation?

Fillmore: Oh, the best I recall, there wasn't too much room in this camp. They'd put on some boxing matches. We had a couple of sailors and some of our fellows, and they'd fight the Australians. That was just about it. Oh, wait a second. They'd put on a show once in awhile once a month or something.

Marcello: I would assume that in a camp like this there was people who had all sorts of talent. Actually, it was like a little town really.

Fillmore: Right. There was quite a bit of talent.

Marcello: Did you ever engage in any athletic activities?

Fillmore: No, I don't believe so. I remember one time the Japanese were getting up a broadcast to Australia. They got me for some reason, and I believe there were about six of us, six or eight of us. They gave us time off to practice singing. I don't know whether it was a quartet or . . . I believe there was about six or eight of us. They'd give us time to practice. We practiced for about three or four days. A Japanese officer came in one day and said he was ready, so they put us in the truck and hauled us down to the local radio station. The head hanchō down there was a civilian. He told me that he worked for one of the movie companies in California before the war. About eight months before the war, they told him to come home, and he never did get back. Anyway, he was running the radio station. He sent out and got a big meal for us. I believe it's the best meal I've ever had while I was a POW. We sat around on the floor and ate that. Then we made the

broadcast. We sang "In the Good Old Summertime."  
Then when we got through singing, why, they . . .  
can't remember what they said. They were talking to  
Australia. That's where it was directed to. That's  
what they told us. Then he asked us our names to go  
over to Australia. When we got through with that,  
they loaded us on the truck and hauled us back to camp.

Marcello: Was there any special reason why they picked you out?  
Did you have any special singing talent?

Fillmore: Not particularly.

Marcello: It was just one of those things where you "volunteered."

Fillmore: I guess. But it wasn't bad.

Marcello: How much contact did you have with the other nationalities  
while you were at Bicycle Camp?

Fillmore: The Australians were about the only ones. I don't  
believe there were any Dutch in the camp. Well, there  
might have been some Dutch. It'd be Australians mostly.

Marcello: Were there any British in this camp?

Fillmore: I can't recall.

Marcello: What sort of a relationship did the Americans maintain  
with the Australians?

Fillmore: Pretty good.

Marcello: Are there any individual Japanese that stand out in  
your mind at this particular camp, either for any

humanitarian gestures that they may have performed or because of some cruelties that they may have been guilty of?

Fillmore: No, I'd say not. There were some people who might know some, but I didn't have any trouble there.

Marcello: Well, as I recall, you remained at this camp . . . well, let me ask you this question, also. Were you at Bicycle Camp when they brought in the survivors from the USS Houston?

Fillmore: Oh, they were there when we got there.

Marcello: What sort of an outfit were they? Were they in pretty good shape by the time you got there, or were they still in pretty bad shape?

Fillmore: I think they were in pretty bad shape. They were kind of scroungy-looking. They lost everything they had except their underwear. But it didn't take long. The day we got in, I know, they came over and we kind of shared some clothes and blankets and stuff with them. You got some good friends that way.

Marcello: Incidentally, when you were captured and when you surrendered, did the Japanese allow you to keep . . . what sort of equipment did the Japanese allow you to keep?

Fillmore: They allowed us to keep everything except firearms.

Marcello: In other words, you still had your mess kit and canteen and hat and things of that nature?

Fillmore: You didn't have your steel helmet.

Marcello: You say you still had that steel helmet?

Fillmore: No, that was when they took all the guns and everything--guns and ammunition and steel helmet. But other than that, why, we kept everything.

Marcello: I would gather that mess kit and that canteen came in handy later on.

Fillmore: It sure did. In fact, I still have it.

Marcello: Is that right?

Fillmore: Yes.

Marcello: How about blankets and things of that nature? Did you have any gear of that sort?

Fillmore: Blankets, had blankets, shelter halves, shoes--two pair of shoes.

Marcello: Well, I guess it was in October of 1942 that you got orders to leave Bicycle Camp.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What were your reactions when you heard that you were going to leave Bicycle Camp? Did you know where you were going? If so, what were your reactions?

Fillmore: I believe there was a rumor where we were going because some of them had left before we did. Well, there really wasn't much you could do about it.

Marcello: But was there a feeling of apprehension? You'd apparently gotten used to Bicycle Camp by this time, and now once again, you were going into the unknown, you might say.

Fillmore: Oh, yes, well, that's the same way every time you left.

Marcello: You really hated to leave a place?

Fillmore: If you knew you were doing pretty good, why, you'd like to stay there.

Marcello: Well, describe what happened. Here it was, October of 1942, you got orders that you were going to leave Bicycle Camp. What happened at that point?

Fillmore: You mean when we left or . . .

Marcello: Yes, right. Just describe the trip from the time you left Bicycle Camp to the time that you got to your ultimate destination.

Fillmore: Well, I can't remember how we got back down to the docks. Anyway, we got back down there. They put us on a barge, a flat barge. The ship was out in the bay there. They pulled it up next to the ship. We got on the ship, and they ran us down in the hold of



the ship. They kept packing us in. They'd make you sit down and pull your knees up under your chin and just kept on packing them in. That's when I figured, why, it's going to start getting pretty rough.

Marcello: Did you still have your gear with you?

Fillmore: I still had the gear, or some of what I had left.

Marcello: So I gather you were packed pretty tightly down in the hold of this ship.

Fillmore: Packed pretty tight.

Marcello: What do you estimate the temperature was down in that hold?

Fillmore: I can't remember that either. But I remember, if I recall right, I think we sat there for a day before we ever took off.

Marcello: Was everybody in pretty good shape at that time yet?

Fillmore: They were in pretty good shape.

Marcello: Which I guess was a good thing.

Fillmore: Yes.

Marcello: So what happened then?

Fillmore: Well, then we took off for Singapore. I can't remember how long that trip took. Not very long.

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen on the trip?

Fillmore: No, not a thing.

Marcello: What sort of provisions did the Japanese give you while you were on this trip?

Fillmore: Oh, they had their rice pots up on deck. They took rice and barley. If I recall right, I believe they did all the cooking.

Marcello: Would they simply pass it down through the hold in a pot or a can?

Fillmore: I believe that's probably right because they wouldn't allow you up on deck.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you ever got a chance to get any air or anything of that nature.

Fillmore: We got up one time, I think. We had some food that we had left over from Bicycle Camp, canned stuff that we were eating on the side. Then we pulled into Singapore, unloaded there, and they took us out to Changi.

Marcello: This is Changi Prison Camp?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Describe what Changi looked like.

Fillmore: Well, it was a pretty desolate place. I believe there were British barracks. I believe they were two, maybe three stories. A lot of them didn't have any windows in them. The food started to taper off then.

Marcello: There were already British prisoners here when you arrived, isn't that correct?

Fillmore: Right. British and Sikhs.

Marcello: What did that outfit look like?

Fillmore: Well, they were getting to look kind of scroungy, too.

Marcello: This is the story I get--that that was a pretty sorry-looking group.

Fillmore: Right. I don't know how many they had there, but that was a pretty big place. They had it fenced off in areas or sections or something. I remember one night I got sick. I guess they thought I had appendicitis or something, and they put me on a two-wheel cart and hauled me over to the British infirmary or hospital or whatever it was. I know we had to pass through a gate. There were several Japanese, and they had some Sikh guards there, too. I stayed over there awhile and came on back.

Marcello: What sort of hospital facilities did they have at Changi?

Fillmore: Not much. I slept on the boards, just sleeping on the floor. Everybody else was the same way. I guess they had some people that were real sick or that were operated on, why, they probably had them in a bed. But I don't know what happened to all the beds. I guess they burned them up.

- Marcello: How did the hospital facilities at Changi compare with those at the Bicycle Camp?
- Fillmore: Oh, I'd say it was not as good. I imagine they were running out of medicine and stuff, too.
- Marcello: I understand that discipline was rather lax at this camp, especially among the British troops. They apparently still hadn't forgiven their officers for what had happened at Singapore. Like I say, they were a pretty sorry bunch as a result.
- Fillmore: Well, I never did have very much contact with them other than over at the hospital, and I was over there just a few days. I believe that's the only time I ever . . . oh, one bunch came up there one time and said that we cut their coconut trees down or something, and they were going to court martial whoever was found that did it.
- Marcello: That is, the British came to the American sector and said that somebody had cut down the King's coconut trees or something of that nature?
- Fillmore: Yes, cut down the King's coconut trees. I remember they picked old Halmer Duckworth out, and he's the last one in the outfit that would cut a coconut tree down.

Marcello: What was his name?

Fillmore: Halmer Duckworth (chuckle).

Marcello: Why do you say that he's the last one that would cut down one of their coconut trees?

Fillmore: He just wouldn't do it (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, you mean the British just came over into your camp? Were these British officers or something?

Fillmore: I think there was a British officer there, and then they had some British MP's. They picked out the biggest ones, I guess, on the whole island to try to make an impression or something.

Marcello: Well, what was the American reaction when the British came stomping over there to pull out some Americans for having cut down the coconut trees?

Fillmore: Oh, they thought it was a lot of fun. There was some of our bunch who were always . . . the British officers had a bunch of buildings down not too far from . . . I guess that was the closest one from where we were. Some of them had their own little gardens, and maybe some of them had a chicken or two. I think somebody was always going down and stealing the chickens or . . . I remember I went down there with a guy one night, and he got a stalk of bananas and I

got bed springs. I think I was the only one, the only American, in that whole outfit over there that had some bed springs.

Marcello: I don't know if this is true or not, but your buddy Pryor told me that wherever he went in prison camp, the American prisoners always seemed, sooner or later, to live a little bit better than the other prisoners did. Did you find this the case?

Fillmore: It seemed that way. Where there's a will, there's a way, I guess.

Marcello: Getting back to this coconut tree, had the Americans actually cut down those trees?

Fillmore: I don't know whether they did or not. I didn't get any of the coconuts.

Marcello: What sort of work details did you engage in here at Changi?

Fillmore: I spent most of my time cleaning out a rubber plantation, I guess, cutting down trees. The Japanese said we were going to make a garden out of it or something. We were going to grow our own vegetables.

Marcello: Were you ever able to obtain any additional food while you were on this work detail?

Fillmore: No, not on this one. That food was kind of scarce to get around there.

Marcello: Were you on this work detail for some time? No, you were only at Changi for about two months, weren't you?

Fillmore: Something like that.

Marcello: It wasn't too long.

Fillmore: It wasn't too long.

Marcello: Were you on this particular work detail the whole time you were there?

Fillmore: When I worked, I believe I was doing that most of the time. No, I take that back. I went down to the docks about two or three days. I was cleaning up down there. We were sitting there one day, I remember, and that's the first time I saw German sailors. They were down by the building. They were walking down the sidewalk. Of course, we could see the submarines coming in to and from the naval base there. But I don't know whether they were off the submarine or whether they were off a raider.

Marcello: What was the attitude of the guards at this particular camp?

Fillmore: I guess it was pretty good. You very seldom saw one, unless you went out on a work detail or something.

Marcello: Did they harass you in any way, that is, in a physical sense?

Fillmore: No.

Marcello: Did you still have Japanese guards here?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: How did this camp compare, so far as cleanliness was concerned, with Bicycle Camp?

Fillmore: It was a little worse shape, I'd say, run-down.

Marcello: How did the food compare with what you had at the Bicycle Camp?

Fillmore: Not near as good.

Marcello: In what way?

Fillmore: Well, everything was a little short. I mean meat and . . . well, just everything.

Marcello: What were you getting mainly?

Fillmore: Oh, about the usual--some stew of some kind.

Marcello: What would a meal consist of, let's say an average or typical meal here at Changi?

Fillmore: Oh, you'd get a ration of rice, and sometimes you'd get a little fish, pumpkin stew or something like that, or maybe some other kind of vegetables. But it was not much.

Marcello: How often did you get fed?

Fillmore: I believe we got fed about three times a day.



Marcello: How hard were you working at this camp?

Fillmore: Not very hard.

Marcello: Did they give you any days off?

Fillmore: I'm sure they did because we weren't working all the time. There was a lot of times we didn't work.

Marcello: Were you ever able to have any contact with the natives here in order to buy additional food or anything of that nature?

Fillmore: No, I wasn't.

Marcello: Did you begin to start losing weight at this camp?

Fillmore: I'd say I started to lose weight then.

Marcello: How about any other diseases? Did anything else come in yet? Let's say malaria, beriberi, pellagra, things of that nature?

Fillmore: I think maybe dysentery started, probably malaria.

Marcello: What sort of latrine facilities and bathing facilities were available at Changi?

Fillmore: Oh, they were satisfactory, I'd say. I mean, they had plenty of water.

Marcello: Were you able to keep yourself reasonably clean?

Fillmore: Yes, keep yourself clean.

Marcello: Okay, now so you remained at Changi until early January of 1943. You'd been a prisoner almost a year by this

time. From talking to the other prisoners, I gather that nobody was really too sad to leave Changi.

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: Why in general was Changi such a bad place? It wasn't nearly as bad as what you were going to run into later on, but it seemed pretty bad at this time.

Fillmore: Right. It was the worse we'd been in so far.

Marcello: Right.

Fillmore: Maybe we figured if we moved up the line, why, it might be a little better. Of course, you always had these rumors running around.

Marcello: Well, once again, when you got ready to leave, did you know where you were going to go?

Fillmore: I believe we did. But we didn't know what it was like.

Marcello: Okay, so on January 9, or some time early in January, you left Changi Prison, and you were bound for Moulmein.

Fillmore: I don't know whether we headed to Moulmein or . . . what's the other town just up the coast? Well, anyway, Moulmein is where we wound up, right.

Marcello: This was a rather interesting trip, as I recall. Let's start from the time you left Singapore and talk about the voyage between there and Moulmein.

Fillmore: Well, we left Singapore on the train and headed up the Malay Peninsula. I believe it took about two days, something like that, because I remember we stopped in one of the towns up there, Ipoh, and I remember we got fed there. I don't know what they fed us, but we got something to eat.

Marcello: You mentioned that you boarded trains in Singapore and made this trip?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What sort of accommodations were there on this train?

Fillmore: I believe we were just in boxcars.

Marcello: Was this a rather harrowing experience or a rather harrowing trip?

Fillmore: Well, it really was because you really didn't know where you were going. You thought you knew but . . . it was just another experience, I guess. Well, anyway, why, we got up to this town up the coast. It was a place called George Town. We loaded on some of these barges again to go to the ship that was parked out there off the island, and we get on this one. I can't remember the name of it, but we sat there for a time and then headed up the coast.

Marcello: What sort of accommodations did you have on this ship?

Fillmore: They were pretty bad accommodations, I'd say. I believe it must have been used for a troop transport before because it had decks down in the holds, about two high, something like that. When you'd get down there, why, they'd press you in the same way, cram you in. I don't know how many of them were on there. Some Australians were on there, too. We were up in the forward hold of the ship, if I recall right. There was another ship there. I think it was loaded with Dutchmen. Then the Japanese had another ship there. It looked like it was a sea-going tug or something. It wasn't a large ship of any kind. Then the three of us, I guess, started up the coast. I don't know how far it was up there, how many days we were on it. It seemed like it was about a couple of days before we hit Moulmein. That's when we got bombed.

Marcello: Describe this attack.

Fillmore: Well, the best I can recall, it was in the afternoon. There were four of us who had an old beat-up deck of cards, and we were playing bridge--Ed Worthington, Luther Prunty, John Hensley and myself. We were partners. I think John and myself were already down about . . . I think we'd already lost about two million dollars or

something (chuckle). Then we heard some scrambling on the deck and just happened to look up and saw these . . . the hold was open up on deck.

Marcello: In other words, you were on one of the lower decks, but the hatch was open, and you could see up through the hatches.

Fillmore: Yes, right. I just saw one plane. I don't know how many there were. I think there were about two or three, I'm not sure. But anyway, why, they were bombing those ships, and you could hear the . . . there's one bomb that I heard, I'm sure, for fifteen minutes coming down. It was a "Whistling Joe." It hit and I thought they'd dropped it right down the smokestack.

Marcello: Now it hit the ship that all those Dutchmen were on, isn't that correct?

Fillmore: I don't know. They hit that one, too, because they sunk it. But this one, I believe . . . the bomb that I heard was the one that must have hit just off the side. The dust was flying, and we were down in this hold, and we couldn't get out. You didn't know whether the thing was sinking or really what was going on. I

believe that was about the scariest I've ever been in my life (chuckle).

Marcello: In other words, you were not hoping that the Americans would sink that ship?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: This is one time that you were not taking up for the good guys.

Fillmore: Right. I'd have gone up and waved a flag if it'd helped any.

Marcello: What did the Japanese do on board your ship?

Fillmore: Well, they had some . . . I believe a couple of anti-aircraft guns on the thing, and they were shooting those. What went on upstairs--I mean, up on the deck--I don't know, other than that there was a lot of commotion and shooting and explosions going off. So after it all finally calmed down, why, I'm sure those . . . they must have run out of bombs or something because they left. That was it. Or maybe they were satisfied with what they did. Then the ship we were on hung around there till dark, just about dark, I think, picking up survivors off of this ship that had sunk. They were bringing some of those guys down in the hold with us.

Marcello: In other words, your hold was already overcrowded, and they then brought in these Dutchmen.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: I would assume they were in pretty bad shape.

Fillmore: Some of them were. I know I scooted over and let one of them in next to me. He had a shrapnel hole in his leg that you could stick your two fingers through. Of course, they didn't get any medical attention or anything. I understood that when they pulled them aboard, why, the ones that looked like they were going to die or something, why, instead of putting them down in the hold, they'd just lay them on the deck or run them aft or there somewhere.

Marcello: I would assume that the American planes had no way of knowing that there were prisoners-of-war on board these ships.

Fillmore: I don't imagine they did.

Marcello: So anyhow, I gather this was a rather harrowing experience.

Fillmore: Yes, it sure was.

Marcello: Was there any panic or anything like that among the prisoners on board the ship during this air raid?

Fillmore: Yes, there was some panic, I'd say. I mean, the first thing you wanted to do was get out of the place. If I

recall, there was only one ladder going out of there. I don't know how many were down in there, but there was a bunch of them. Anyhow, one of our officers, Captain Fowler, why, he kind of got up and took command of the thing and got everybody kind of calmed down. I guess everybody knew that there wasn't much you could do anyway, except probably stomp each other to death trying to get out up the ladder.

Marcello: During this trip to Moulmein, did you get a chance to come up on board deck and get some fresh air or anything of that nature?

Fillmore: Yes, I did, I believe. No, I didn't either. That was on the other one coming to Singapore, I guess. But on this one, I didn't. Maybe some of them got up, I don't know. But I didn't.

Marcello: How long did you say you were in the hold of that ship altogether?

Fillmore: I imagine it was about three days. It couldn't have been too long because it's not too far up there.

Marcello: Okay then, you landed at Moulmein, which is in Burma.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Where did you go when you landed at Moulmein?

Fillmore: They put us in a local prison there--Moulmein Prison.



Marcello: What was it like?

Fillmore: It was getting worse all the time.

Marcello: In what way?

Fillmore: Well, food and facilities and the whole works.

Marcello: What were the sleeping facilities like here at this prison?

Fillmore: Oh, they were about the same. I was sleeping out on the kind of a porch deal there. You just slept on the floor. I remember across the next building over there, why, there was a bunch of Dutchmen over there who'd been on this ship that got sunk. They didn't have anything. I remember in the mornings when I'd get up, why . . . I had a friend. We kind of buddied up together. His name was Eastwood. He died later on. It got pretty cold, pretty cool there. We'd kind of pool all of the blankets and kind of sleep together to stay a little warmer. In the morning, why, we'd give our blankets to these Dutchmen across the street. They'd sleep during the day, and then we'd sleep at night. We didn't do any work there, other than maybe mess duty or something. I worked, I think, a couple of days.

Marcello: Were you more or less confined to cells as such at this jail?

Fillmore: Well, no, not cells. They had cells there, but we weren't locked in. The area was fairly small. I remember washing rice. Water was short, and I remember I was trying to wash the rice. They must have swept it up off the rice mill floor or something because it was in bad shape, the rice was.

Marcello: It had pebbles and everything else in it?

Fillmore: Pebbles and rat droppings and weevils and bugs and dirt.

Marcello: By this time, were you particular about that sort of thing yet?

Fillmore: I was getting to where it wouldn't bother me a bit.

Marcello: How were the guards at this jail, of course, keeping in mind that you really didn't stay there that long?

Fillmore: Well, I guess the guards were outside. I don't recall hardly ever seeing a guard inside.

Marcello: Now up until this time, had you received any mail from home or any news from the outside, any food parcels?

Fillmore: No.

Marcello: In other words, you had literally become the "Lost

Battalion" by this time. Nobody really knew where you were or what had happened to you for the most part.

Fillmore: I imagine.

Marcello: Well, I don't think there's too much we can really say about your stay here at this jail. It was rather an uneventful stay. It was very short, and you didn't do anything. From there, I think it was about January 27, 1943, that you finally moved up to Thanbyuzayat, is that correct?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: That was more or less a base-type camp, was it not?

Fillmore: I believe it was.

Marcello: Eventually, I believe they established a hospital there of some sort.

Fillmore: A hospital, right.

Marcello: Well, how long did you stay at Thanbyuzayat?

Fillmore: I think just about . . . I was trying to think how we got there. I believe it was . . . they trained us up there just to unload, and then we walked up to 18 Kilo Camp.

Marcello: Okay, you went from Thanbyuzayat, and your first stop was the 18 Kilo Camp.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Well, quite obviously, their whole purpose in shipping you there was to work on this railroad that was running from Moulmein to Bangkok?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: It was more or less a shortcut across that isthmus or that peninsula there.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: Like I say, your whole purpose was to work on this railroad. Then as the road progressed, they would have these various camps built such as the 18 Kilo Camp and the 80 Kilo Camp and the 100 Kilo Camp and so on and so forth. Okay, so your first stop on the building of this railroad was at the 18 Kilo Camp. What exactly was it like there? Describe what the camp itself was like.

Fillmore: Well, when we walked in there, and it looked like it'd just been finished. I imagine they used some of the local Burmese to build it. It was just bamboo with grass roofs, bamboo decks on each side of a passageway going down the middle--dirt floors and just split bamboo decks off the ground. They even had a latrine there that was the same way. It had grass sides and a grass roof on it.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did you receive from the Japanese who were there?

Fillmore: Well, I can't remember what kind of a reception we got. I recall they had us out working the next day, I believe. You're not talking about that deal with that Japanese colonel when we started the railroad, are you?

Marcello: Well, I did have him in mind. I wanted to talk a little bit about Colonel Nagatomo. When did you meet him for the first time? At Thanbyuzayat?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: I would assume that's more or less where his headquarters were.

Fillmore: I expect it was.

Marcello: Did he give you some sort of a speech or a talk or an orientation program there?

Fillmore: He gave us a good, good speech.

Marcello: What was the gist of that speech?

Fillmore: Well, just work hard and be good.

Marcello: Or?

Fillmore: Or get buried (chuckle).

Marcello: Is that literally what he told you?

Fillmore: Just about.

Marcello: Did you take him at his word or did you think he was bluffing?

Fillmore: Well, about half and half at that time. Have you ever seen that speech? Have you got a copy of it?

Marcello: Yes, I have a copy of the speech. James Gee gave it to me. I xeroxed a copy of it. So anyhow, you got to the 18 Kilo Camp, and as you mentioned, you got there one day, and you were put to work the next day.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: What sort of work were you doing here at the 18 Kilo Camp?

Fillmore: We were, I believe, making a cut or maybe it was a fill. I believe it was a cut--the first one we were working on.

Marcello: Was this a pick-and-shovel-type job?

Fillmore: Strictly pick-and-shovel, yes.

Marcello: What sort of requirements did you have to meet on this particular job?

Fillmore: I believe it was .75 cubic meters a day. I believe that's what it started out.

Marcello: In other words, each man had to move .75 cubic meters of dirt a day.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: This was pretty low, was it not? A pretty low quota.

Fillmore: It was pretty low. We were still in pretty good shape then. Of course, they gave you that to move, and I guess we were a little bit too eager. We'd move it and then get back home.

Marcello: Sometimes you could even knock off before noon.

Fillmore: Right. But that didn't last too long. They kept "ooching" it up a little bit--up to one, then one and a quarter, then one and a half. I think the last place I was in moving dirt it was up to two and a quarter.

Marcello: By the time it was up to two and a quarter, and considering your physical condition, I would assume that was an all-day job from sunup to sundown in moving that two and a quarter cubic meters.

Fillmore: Longer than that, depending on the weather. If it was raining, why, I remember in this one place, why, they kicked you out of bed at four or five in the morning, and sometimes you didn't get back till two or three the next morning.

Marcello: Well, describe what a typical day was like here working on this railroad, let's say, at the 18 Kilo Camp.

Fillmore: Oh, you'd get up and get your rice and your soup, go down by the guardhouse, pick up your shovel, pick, or

whatever you were going to carry, and march up the railroad to wherever the job was. There were, I think, thirty in a kumi and one of our officers in charge of it. We'd go up and they'd measure the area out we had to move. If the guard wasn't looking, you'd always move the stakes back a little bit. But that didn't happen too often. You dug and picked and shoveled and filled up the baskets and hauled them on a bamboo pole. A man on each end of it would haul it up and dump it, come back and do the same thing.

Marcello: Now were you working with Japanese engineers or Japanese personnel of some sort on each one of these projects at these camps?

Fillmore: Right. There was a Japanese engineer. That's when the Korean guards started showing up.

Marcello: Let's talk first of all about the engineers. I gather that a lot of times they were pretty nasty guys on these work projects.

Fillmore: Some of them were, and some of them weren't.

Marcello: What would they possibly do? Let's suppose you ran into a nasty one.

Fillmore: Well, of course, they were just always wanting a little more speed. Oh, if you'd misplace your shovel or something,



why, they might get nasty and work you over a little bit but not too much. Most of the ones that I had dealings with weren't too bad. They'd get upset sometimes.

Marcello: What were the Korean guards like?

Fillmore: I'd say they were a pretty mean bunch of people. I don't know whether they were mean or not or whether they were told to be that way. But anyway, they were pretty mean individuals.

Marcello: What were some of the things that they would possibly do?

Fillmore: Oh, they'd work you over for practically nothing, no reason.

Marcello: What were some of their favorite methods or means of punishment?

Fillmore: Most of the time they would just pick up a stick or something and work you over or maybe slap you around or kick you in the shins.

Marcello: Did you ever get used to treatment of this sort?

Fillmore: No, I don't believe you would.

Marcello: Did you ever see any cases where a prisoner might impulsively strike back at one of these guards?

Fillmore: No, I don't believe you would.

Marcello: Did you ever see any cases where a prisoner might impulsively strike back at one of these guards?

Fillmore: No. You mean, did I ever see one strike back?

Marcello: Yes, at a guard.

Fillmore: No.

Marcello: Why do you think these guards were so bad?

Fillmore: I really don't know.

Marcello: Do you think it was probably because the Japanese had more or less been stomping on them for awhile, and now they finally found somebody that they could stomp on--somebody who was lower than them?

Fillmore: That well could be right. It's a pretty good assumption anyway.

Marcello: Did you ever have any nicknames for any of these guards?

Fillmore: Yes, we had a few. There was "Helpful Henry."

Marcello: How did "Helpful Henry" get his name?

Fillmore: Well, "Helpful Henry," why, you'd be shoveling dirt or chopping a tree down or something, and he always had a better way of doing it, or he was always trying to help. So we called him "Helpful Henry." Then there was "Holy Joe." I believe he was the only Christian--or he said he was anyway--among the Koreans or the Japanese, as far as I know. Then there was "The Undertaker," and there was "Makan."

Marcello: What was the last one's name?

Fillmore: "Makan." In Japanese, that means food. He was always trying to get something to eat, I think.

Marcello: Why did you call this one guy "The Undertaker?"

Fillmore: Well, I don't know whether it is true or not, but somebody said he beat one guy to death. Now I don't know. He was kind of a big Korean, and he was mean. Then there was "Hitahara." He was kind of the head Korean. He could speak English. He was kind of the interpreter.

Marcello: Was this his proper name, or was this another nickname for him?

Fillmore: I don't know whether that was his real name or . . . it doesn't sound much like it. But he was a mean one.

Marcello: When did you start losing men? Was it at the 18 Kilo Camp, or did it come at one of the later camps?

Fillmore: Well, they started getting sick there at Moulmein Prison, some of them did, and then at 18. That's where I first got sick. I got dysentery there. When the others moved up the line, well, they left the sick behind. Then later on, why, we walked up to 30 Kilo Camp.

Marcello: In other words, you were sick enough at the 18 Kilo Camp that you were left behind, at least temporarily, while they moved on up to the 30 Kilo Camp?

Fillmore: No, I think they moved on up to 80.

Marcello: Up to 80?

Fillmore: I believe.

Marcello: I see.

Fillmore: Then I moved up to 30 and then from 30 to 80. That's where I ran into the bunch that left 18.

Marcello: Incidentally, describe what the terrain was like that you were working through on this railroad.

Fillmore: It was pretty, pretty rugged--mountainy, hilly. The dry season it was kind of like a desert. In the monsoon season it was like a swamp. Some places it was real rocky, and others it was pretty good soil.

Marcello: Was it covered with jungle?

Fillmore: It was covered with vegetation--bamboo and trees, undergrowth.

Marcello: In working on this railroad, did you ever encounter very many snakes or centipedes or things of this nature?

Fillmore: Yes, some snakes but not too many. Centipedes and scorpions, ants. As far as any other wildlife to speak of, why, not much. You could hear a few wild chickens around.

Marcello: Were you ever able to supplement your diet in any way while you were on these work details?

Fillmore: No, at that time there wasn't any natives to speak of. There were a few, but I imagine they were just about as hard up as we were. There just was no food at all other than what you got from the Japanese.

Marcello: Which I gather by this time was becoming very, very skimpy and meager, is that correct?

Fillmore: That's correct.

Marcello: I would assume food was particularly a scarce item during the monsoon season because I gather the deeper you got into the jungle, the tougher it was for those supply trucks and what have you to reach the base camps.

Fillmore: Well, that's right. Then you get up the line, and if you're on the end camp, why, there's other camps below you. It might start out on a train and then in a truck. By the time it goes through every one of these camps, why, by the time everybody gets their hands on it, why, the only thing that wound up in the camp up at 100 Kilo would be the wheels on the flatcar. Everybody'd stolen everything else off of it, including the side boards and the frame (chuckle).

Marcello: What sort of medical facilities were available here at the 18 Kilo Camp?

Fillmore: They had a hut where they kept the sick. As far as facilities, there was no facilities at all.

Marcello: Were there any medicines available?

Fillmore: There may have been a little quinine around, but not in any great supply.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that a great many of the men were coming down with dysentery in particular at this time. Were there any sort of remedies available for dysentery?

Fillmore: No, we didn't have them if there were. They'd give you charcoal, I think. That was the main thing.

Marcello: Was Dr. Lumpkin your doctor at this time yet?

Fillmore: Right. He was still . . .

Marcello: He was still alive yet.

Fillmore: He was still alive.

Marcello: Okay, so you were mainly engaged on pick-and-shovel jobs on this project. Were there ever any ways or means of sabotaging any of the work on the building of this railroad?

Fillmore: No, I don't believe so, other than maybe losing your tools or something like that. But there really wasn't anything you could do other than, oh, maybe if you were laying track and need spikes, well, you might throw some spikes over in the jungle. But they always . . . they figured that out. They'd go along

the side, and if they'd find a spike laying out in the brush, why, they'd come back up and work you over for that, so . . . and a few spikes is not going to make much difference anyway.

Marcello: What would happen if you did deliberately lose some of your tools and so on. Could you expect to be punished for this?

Fillmore: I imagine so. I think some Australians tried it.

Marcello: Were there ever any escape attempts while you were working on this railroad?

Fillmore: Not in any of the camps I was in. Somebody said a couple Australians, two or three of them, tried it down at Thanbyuzayat somewhere.

Marcello: Again, there was really no place to go, was there?

Fillmore: No place to go. The closest place was a thousand miles, and we couldn't get two miles out of camp.

Marcello: Now of all the camps that you worked at over this railroad, which one was the worst? Was it the 100 Kilo Camp? Was that where things got to be the worst?

Fillmore: Well, right. From 30 Kilo I went up to 100 Kilo. Then I came down with ulcers and dysentery, too, and fever and everything else that goes along with it. That wasn't a very good place to be.

Marcello: What made the 100 Kilo Camp such a bad place?

Fillmore: Well, there was no food for one thing. We got up there about the middle of May, if I recall right. That's about when the monsoon season started.

Marcello: This was also when the so-called "Speedo" campaign was started, was it not? This is when they really put the pressure on you to get moving on that railroad?

Fillmore: Right, get moving.

Marcello: So there was a combination of all these things that kind of culminated at the 100 Kilo Camp. There was the "Speedo" campaign, there were the monsoons, plus you were hit with all of these various disease and what have you. I gather that the camp wasn't exactly located in the most healthful of places, was it?

Fillmore: Well, I don't know. I imagine anyplace they'd put it would be about the same shape.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you had tropical ulcers. Would you describe what they were like and how you got them and what sort of treatment you could get for them?

Fillmore: Oh, I think they start out with a little scratch or broken skin, and it starts getting infected. Legs start to swell up, turn red, and it starts to slough out. It just keeps going unless it stops.



Marcello: What do you mean when you say that it would slough out?

Fillmore: Well, the flesh would just deteriorate. You'd pour water on it or something and then wash all the decomposed meat out. It just kept going, and if it didn't stop, why, it just ate down to the bone or down to the foot or maybe just get to an artery or something and maybe bleed to death.

Marcello: Was there anything that you could do to try and combat these tropical ulcers?

Fillmore: They tried hot water, warm water. I tried about everything. I tried hot water. When the sun would come out, I'd stick them out in the sun and see if that would help any. Urinate in it. I read that from T. E. Lawrence's The Seven Pillars of Wisdom. That's what their wounded did to their wounds. So I tried that, and I don't know whether that stopped mine or not.

Marcello: I understand some people even put maggots in these wounds to let them eat the dead flesh.

Fillmore: Well, I think they tried that on some, but you had a hard time keeping them out to start with. I didn't have any trouble keeping them in. I had trouble keeping them out (chuckle). Anyway from 100 Kilo I

got down so bad . . . like you say, they wanted this "Speedo" stuff, and any of these people who couldn't work, they shipped them back to 80 Kilo.

Marcello: Okay, now they had established a hospital of sorts-- I use that term loosely--at the 80 Kilo Camp.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: They sent a rather large contingent, did they not, from the 100 Kilo Camp back to the 80 Kilo Camp?

Fillmore: Quite a few.

Marcello: Describe what that journey was like from the 100 Kilo back down to the 80 Kilo Camp?

Fillmore: Well, when they shipped me down there, why, of course, people would go down . . . they'd send the sick ones back down there, nobody would ever hear from them. They didn't know what kind of a camp it was, so everybody was kind of hesitant about going back down there. But anyway, it got to the point that if you couldn't work, you had to go. So I believe it was about . . . they put us in the truck. I think it was about eight or ten of us--maybe two Americans, and the rest were Australians or Dutch or something. Dan Sewell was with me--he died, too, down there--and it took two days to get there. It's only twenty kilometers.

Marcello: You went by truck, you say?

Fillmore: Right. We couldn't walk. We stopped and spent the night at this little Japanese camp down there somewhere. It just had one hut, I think it was. They gave us an onion for supper that night. That's all we got. We stayed in the back of the truck all night long. We got down to 80 Kilo the next day. They unloaded us and put us on the bamboo deck there. That was the worst camp I was ever in.

Marcello: Well, one of the things that kind of stands out in my mind from this trip was that there was a good many prisoners that went back down to this 80 Kilo Camp, but the Japanese had very few guards for all these prisoners, which I think was some sort of an indication as to the type of shape that these prisoners were in.

Fillmore: I imagine that's right because they didn't take anybody to guard them. All they took was the truck driver because they couldn't get up off of their rear end, any of them.

Marcello: About how many were there down at this 80 Kilo Camp?

Fillmore: Oh, I would say just off hand about 300. Of course, I never did get up.

Marcello: What exactly were you afflicted with at this time?  
Now you had the tropical ulcers. You had dysentery.

Fillmore: Fever, malaria.

Marcello: You had malaria.

Fillmore: I guess beriberi.

Marcello: And all of the other dietary deficiencies that go  
with these things.

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: So anyhow, you got back down to the 80 Kilo Camp.  
What sort of medical facilities or help was available  
to you there?

Fillmore: Well, there was no medical facility at all, I mean  
no medicine, no orderlies. I think there was a  
Dutch doctor there and that was it. They had some  
cooks there. I think Charles Pryor and maybe Hugh  
Faulk were down there, and they were cooking in the  
kitchen. That was it. You were just on your own.

Marcello: In other words, you were just laying there. If you  
recovered, fine. If you didn't, that was just the  
way it was. They really didn't care.

Fillmore: That's right. That's the way it was.

Marcello: With all these men dying, did you ever have to  
participate in any of the burial details or anything  
of that nature?

Fillmore: No, because I couldn't get up off of the deck, and most of them down there were the same way.

Marcello: Well, what happened? Obviously you were incapacitated. You were so sick that you couldn't get up. How did you recover? What happened?

Fillmore: Well, I really don't know what happened because they were . . . oh, they were dying like flies. They had people laid out all over the place. If I recall right, I think at one time there there were six Americans dead. One next to me died, and the one down at my feet sat up one evening and screamed like a wild Indian and fell over dead as a mackerel. Old Sewell died. I don't know what changed me. It wasn't any food or it wasn't any medication. Maybe it was just luck because of all of the Americans that went down there, there's not too many of them got out of that place.

Marcello: How long did you remain at this camp altogether?

Fillmore: I can't say for sure, but I imagine it must have been six weeks or something like that.

Marcello: I'm sure you probably had no concept of exact time.

Fillmore: No, that's right.

Marcello: I gather that you did absolutely nothing while you were here.

Fillmore: Not a thing.

Marcello: Well, what happened when you were fairly well again?

Fillmore: Well, I guess that when they figured out I wasn't going to die, why, they loaded me in the back of the truck and hauled me back up to 100 Kilo.

Marcello: Did you ever get back to Thanbyuzayat again where there were better hospital facilities?

Fillmore: No.

Marcello: Okay, so you went back up to 100 Kilo again. Then what happened?

Fillmore: Well, I still wasn't in too good a shape and still had all the problems. The ulcer hadn't . . . it had stopped.

Marcello: It had stopped?

Fillmore: It had stopped, but I mean it hadn't healed or anything. But it stopped getting bigger. I still couldn't walk--maybe just hobble around on one leg. I went out, I guess, for about three or four days. They'd put you in the back of the truck, and you'd go up on the side of the hill. They'd give you a hammer and beat ballast for the railroad.

Marcello: This was considered light duty?

Fillmore: I guess that was light duty. That went on for a while, and then I got the fever again. That seemed like every time you got a good dose of that, why, your ulcer turns black, and then it starts sloughing out again. So that's the way it went on until we moved out of there up to Thailand.

Marcello: Was the 100 Kilo Camp the last camp you were in before you eventually moved into Thailand itself?

Fillmore: Right.

Marcello: I gather that as you got into the jungle and the more you progressed on that railroad, the worse conditions became.

Fillmore: That's right.

Marcello: What sort of days were the prisoners putting in on that railroad during the so-called "Speedo" campaign?

Fillmore: They were putting in, I imagine, at least . . . the bunch I was with were putting in anywhere from . . . I'll say a short day would be, I'd say, fourteen or fifteen hours. A lot of times you'd get back and get in bed and maybe a couple hours sleep, and you were up at it again. That went on for some time.

Marcello: Would that be seven days a week?

Fillmore: That's seven days a week.

Marcello: Well, finally the railroad was completed sometime around--I've seen various dates--October, November of 1943, 1944? 1943, wasn't it?

Fillmore: It must have been.

Marcello: About 1943. As I recall, there was a ceremony held at a place called Three Pagodas Pass. Were you perhaps present at that ceremony?

Fillmore: No, I sure wasn't. I heard about it, but I wasn't there.

Marcello: In other words, you went right from the 100 Kilo Camp on the railroad that you'd just built over into Thailand. Where did you go when you got into Thailand?

Fillmore: We went to Kanburi.

Marcello: Okay, this would be in around January of 1944 that you got there, I think.

Fillmore: Right. Well, let's see. When we went up to Thailand, we had to get off the train and walk awhile. Well, there was a bridge blown out. I guess they bombed the bridge or something. They had a train on the other side of the bridge. We got back on the train and then went to Kanburi.

Marcello: Another name for that . . . that was the short name for this camp. I think the long name was Kanchanaburi or something like that, was it not?



Fillmore: Right, a little town.

Marcello: What sort of a camp was this?

Fillmore: That was a pretty good camp.

Marcello: I guess anything was good after 100 Kilo.

Fillmore: Yes, that's right

Marcello: Describe what the living quarters were like at Kanburi?

Fillmore: Well, they were the same bamboo huts with the grass roofs. There was a bunch of mango trees in the place. It had a well. The food was a whole lot better than what we'd been getting back down on the railroad--that's for sure. I mean, it wasn't anything extra, but at least you had some. It didn't seem like we did too much working around there on the railroad. I wasn't there too long. I think hauling wood was the main thing that I did.

Marcello: Just hauling or were you actually in on the chopping of the wood and that sort of thing? Or was your job strictly hauling?

Fillmore: Just hauling.

Marcello: What sort of physical condition were you in by this time?

Fillmore: Oh, I can't really say. Not too good. I still had the ulcer and everything else. That was the place

where we were . . . they had an ammunition dump or bomb dump. We were working over in that thing and moving railroad ties up to the railroad. We'd load them on flatcars. I wasn't there too long.

Marcello: Did the Japanese guards more or less leave you alone here at this camp?

Fillmore: Fairly well, oh, unless they caught you trying to deal with the natives on the work party or something or steal a mango off the tree, something like that. But they wasn't too bad.

Marcello: How long were you here altogether?

Fillmore: I don't know if there . . . they took one bunch out of there and sent them to Saigon, and I was there about maybe two weeks after that. I don't know when that was.

Marcello: Up until this time, had you received any Red Cross packages or anything of that nature yet?

Fillmore: I believe, no. No. The first one was in another camp after that. That's the first Red Cross rations we got.

Marcello: Had you been allowed to send out any postcards or anything of that nature yet?

Fillmore: I think we'd been allowed to send a postcard or two. I believe back down in maybe 100 Kilo or someplace.

Marcello: I assume these were the standard type of postcards where you simply had to more or less fill in or circle the proper space--"My health is good, fair, poor." If you didn't mark "good," the card didn't get out.

Fillmore: That well could have been. Did you ever see one of those cards?

Marcello: Yes, I sure have. I sure have. Well, you mentioned that you weren't in Kanburi too long. The worst, I guess, was more or less behind you at this point, since you were no longer really working on the railroad. Where did you move from Kanburi?

Fillmore: I moved to . . . I believe it was Tamarkan.

Marcello: What was Tamarkan like?

Fillmore: Well, it was a pretty good-sized camp. I can't remember too much about it. We were working down on the river hauling gravel out of the river. I guess they were using it for ballast . . . I mean for on the railroad. Then we worked for a while on building a dummy railroad siding off of the main track. They'd have these dummy . . . make them out of wood. I worked awhile on those.

Marcello: Was this fairly easy work?

Fillmore: Yes, it was fairly easy compared to what it had been.  
I mean, you'd always get back by dark.

Marcello: Now at either Kanburi or Tamarkan, did you experience  
any American air raids?

Fillmore: At Kanburi. I was in Kanburi when they bombed Tamarkan  
because you could see the airplanes from there. They  
weren't very far apart. But in Kanburi . . . let's  
see, was that the camp? I can't remember whether  
that was the camp or not. The Japanese had a kind  
of a headquarters and a big storage area right close  
to the camp we were in. I can't remember which one  
it was. They came over one day and bombed that thing.

Marcello: What was the reaction of the Japanese when they bombed?

Fillmore: You mean the guards in the camp?

Marcello: Right.

Fillmore: Well, they were kind of shook up, too, I think. They  
would hit their holes. Anyway, this camp must have  
been fairly close because we were watching the planes.  
We could see those bombs come out. Maybe eight  
bombs would come out, and you'd count them, and  
maybe you'd hear about six go off. So they must  
have bombed that thing for forty-five minutes. The  
shrapnel was coming through our huts. So when it  
was all over, why, they had a tenko, and then they  
had a work party go over . . .

Marcello: Tenko is a roll call, right?

Fillmore: Right . . . to clean up this mess. I didn't want to go because I figured they had some bombs over there that hadn't gone off that might have a time-piece on them or something. Anyway, why, you didn't have much choice. We went over there. I guess those bombs that didn't go off were probably incendiary bombs, cluster deals. But they really wrecked that place.

Marcello: What did this do for your morale?

Fillmore: Well, after it was over, why, it kind of boosted it a little bit. While it was going on, why, you . . .

Marcello: Was this maybe your first indication that the Allies were winning the war?

Fillmore: No, that came about a little earlier, I think, because we could hear those planes at night flying around, and you never did see a Japanese plane.

Marcello: Did you have any way at all of receiving news from the outside world?

Fillmore: No, at that time we didn't.

Marcello: Nobody had built any clandestine radios or anything of that nature?

Fillmore: Well, they said they did. I think they caught Major Rogers with a . . . I don't know whether it was a radio

or newspaper or something. They threw him in jail. I think Parker, too. They threw him in jail. But I wasn't in that camp. But we had nothing other than just rumors that always went around.

Marcello: Did the Japanese allow you to build any sort of slit trenches or anything like that in case there'd be future raids?

Fillmore: Yes, they'd let you dig the trenches. In fact, I think they kind of requested it.

Marcello: Where were you when you were finally liberated?

Fillmore: I was up in Thailand. I don't know the name of the camp or whether it even had a name.

Marcello: It wasn't Tamuang, was it?

Fillmore: There were only six Americans there.

Marcello: Did you go to this little camp from Tamarkan?

Fillmore: Right. We went on a train. I recall a sign and it looked like it'd been painted over old, and the town was called Cratchai. You heard that one before?

Marcello: No.

Fillmore: We got off of that and walked about, I guess, three or four miles to this camp.

Marcello: There were just six Americans?

Fillmore: There were just about six Americans.

Marcello: How come they picked you out to go to this camp?

Fillmore: I don't know. There were a bunch of Australians. All the rest of them were Australians. It was right on the base of a big mountain. It had a big temple up there. We were knocking rice terraces down to level off some ground or something--I don't know what it was--then there was some kind of mountains. We were digging tunnels in those mountains. They were storing gasoline and bombs and stuff like that. That was the same way as on the railroad so far as quotas. It was solid rock. They were three meters square, and you had to go back so many meters a day. All you had was a sledge hammer and a crowbar and a shovel. That was hard digging.

Marcello: How long were you at this camp altogether?

Fillmore: I expect about three months. No, wait a second. It might have been more than that because I got hurt up there. We were in one of these tunnels, back quite a ways. The Japanese were up there. They were digging, too. They had their troops up there digging. They had some dynamite they were using on theirs. They'd set off a charge or light the fuse and then run. About the time it went off, they started yelling,

which was too late. I was in there down the line. I guess these tunnels must have been fifty feet apart. Anyway, the roof came down. We'd shore them up as we'd go in, but it was back there and maybe hadn't been shored up for a meter or so. The roof came down and hit me on the back. I guess it was about a mile back down to the camp. I remember coming to about the time we got in front of the guardhouse. So I stayed there over in the hospital for about . . . I don't know, it must have been six weeks.

Marcello: Did you have any broken bones or anything of that nature?

Fillmore: I must have. I guess when they grew back together, why, it must have kind of fused some of them. Since then I've had some fused. I still have trouble with it. I was still recuperating there when the war was over.

Marcello: What sort of hospital facilities were there at this camp?

Fillmore: There wasn't any. The same thing. I mean there was no medicine. If you hurt, you hurt. If you didn't hurt, why, it was all right.

Marcello: Well, describe the events leading up to your liberation.



Fillmore: Well, I was over in that hospital there for about six weeks, I guess. Then I got to where I could walk, and I went back over to one of the huts. When I got back over there, why, they must have had a battalion of Japanese infantry in the camp with us. They just had a little three-foot high fence. In fact, the hut I was in was right across this fence from where the Japanese were. So one afternoon I looked over there, and I saw these jokers burning . . . I don't know. They was burning something, papers or something. I didn't know what they was burning. Then I saw some of them kind of crying and moping around. About an hour later, why, the Australian sergeant in charge of the camp called a tenko and told us then the war was over. Then all the Korean guards changed clothes, their black suits, and took off. The Japanese moved out of the camp. They patrolled the perimeter on the outside. We stayed there, I guess . . . but then we started getting a little better groceries. In fact, one of those Korean guards came back in the next day and had three or four Thais with him and a darned truck. He was bringing groceries and selling them to us.

Marcello: What were your reactions when you found out the war was over?

Fillmore: Well, kind of stunned or went numb or something like that. It was one of those things where you just couldn't believe it happened.

Marcello: You'd probably heard so many rumors since you'd been a prisoner-of-war that you'd believe it when you see it.

Fillmore: Yes. But it was a pretty good feeling. Then about three . . . I guess three or four days after that, why, one of our officers came in a truck and got the Americans and took us to a go-down there in Saigon. That was about it. We stayed there, I think . . . it seemed like a week or maybe more.

Marcello: And did nothing but eat and rest?

Fillmore: That's about right. Then they flew us over to Calcutta and put us in the hospital there. We did the same thing there--eat and rest, enjoyed it. We had an old boy that . . . he must have been in the Quartermaster Corps. He was an American soldier. We were fenced in there where we were in this hospital. We got hold of him, and every evening, why, he'd come up there with a ricksha, and he'd have about four or

five cases of beer and two or three blocks of ice. You couldn't even see him in the ricksha. He'd throw it over the fence, and we'd pay him for it. We'd sit out there between those buildings and drink beer out of a garbage can.

Marcello: I guess you had a lot of back pay coming, didn't you?

Fillmore: Yes, I guess. I believe we . . . oh, we got some then and the rest of it, I guess, we got when we got home.

Marcello: I've noticed how . . . kind of interesting . . . how the expressions on your face have changed from the time that we were talking about your experiences at the 100 Kilo Camp and 80 Kilo Camp until the time that we're talking about the liberation here. By the time we get to the liberation, you had a big smile on your face. Those are some of the good times, I guess, that you've remembered. I kind of hate to remind you of some of the more horrible things, but if we're going to have a good record, I guess we really need to talk about that sort of thing.

Fillmore: Yes.

Marcello: At the time of your liberation, did you have any thoughts of revenge that you wanted to take out on any of the Japanese or Korean guards?

- Fillmore: Oh, at that particular time, no. Maybe a little later because I wasn't out of the country yet. But that soon passed, I think, with time.
- Marcello: Incidentally, the whole time you were a prisoner-of-war, what did you think about the most? What was the thought that was most constantly on your mind?
- Fillmore: I think getting back to this country and getting a good meal and how well off this country was and seeing the family and just life in general.
- Marcello: As you look back on your experiences as a prisoner-of-war, what do you think was the thing that pulled you through?
- Fillmore: I'd kind of made up my mind way back there that I was going to make it.
- Marcello: In other words, it was simply a case of never giving up.
- Fillmore: I imagine that was it.
- Marcello: Like one of the prisoners told me, the ones that gave up are still over there yet.
- Fillmore: A lot of them are. A lot of them couldn't help it, but a lot of them just flat quit.
- Marcello: At the time of your liberation, did you pretty much hate the Japanese?
- Fillmore: I'd suspect so. Maybe the Japanese and the Koreans both.

Marcello: Has time healed the wounds?

Fillmore: I think so because after I finished school, why, I went back over in the Hawaiian Islands, and there was Japanese over there--plenty. I worked for some of them, side by side.

Marcello: There are lots of Japanese in the Hawaiian Islands.

Fillmore: Right. Koreans, too.

Marcello: We've talked about a lot of the horrible things that took place in the prisoner-of-war camps. Can you think of any of the funny things that occurred that you might want to get into the record? Are there any funny stories that you think about?

Fillmore: Oh, gosh, at the time they weren't funny. Oh, I guess you've probably heard that about the . . . I guess it was at Kanburi. The Japanese caught the guy with the mango?

Marcello: No.

Fillmore: Of course, the mango trees were in the camp. Every time they'd hit the ground at night, why, here'd come a guard, you see, wanting to see if somebody was knocking it off. Anyway, they caught him with this mango. They shoved this mango in his mouth and stood him out in front of the guardhouse with a couple of bricks in both hands.

Marcello: He had to hold the bricks straight out, I assume?

Fillmore: Yes. Then there was the time when we was down at Tanjong Priok in one of these warehouses. It was one of those that had the sweet cream in it. This Japanese lined us up and was going to give us a lecture on stealing. He said that we couldn't steal from the Japanese because they were too smart and all this. He was walking up and down giving us this lecture about stealing. He turned around to walk and somebody threw an empty sweet cream can out behind him (chuckle). He panicked on that one. That was real funny.

Marcello: What food did you have a craving for most while you were a prisoner-of-war?

Fillmore: I think maybe kind of greasy foods, you know--fried eggs and sausage and stuff like that.

Marcello: I've heard a lot of prisoners say that they had this craving for some sort of greasy food.

Fillmore: I guess maybe it's the protein.

Marcello: Were you one of those prisoners that sat around all the time whenever you had any spare moments and dreamed up all sorts of wild recipes?

Fillmore: No. I don't believe I did. I thought a lot about it though, but I never did dream up any recipes.

A P P E N D I X

657 T

VII 17869

收容所 Camp	爪哇 昭和17年8月15日	番 No.	號 爪哇-9145
姓名 Name	FILLMORE, Benjamin Dewitt.	生年月日 Date of Birth	1920-1-31
國籍 Nationality	AMERICAN A. Cpl.	所屬部隊 Unit	No.20814095 2nd. Battalion, 131st. Field Artillery. United States Army.
階級身分 Rank	Corporal. 砲兵中士	捕獲年月日 Date of Capture	昭和17年3月8日
捕獲場所 Place of Capture	爪哇	母ノ名 Mother's Name	FILLMORE, Kathrine.
父ノ名 Father's Name	FILLMORE, Rollin S.	職 業 Occupation	學生
本籍地 Place of Origin	Corwith, Iowa, U.S.A.	通報先 Destination of Report	Dr..R.S.FILLMORE, Jacksboro, Texas, U.S.A.
		特記事項 Remark	

備濟

6741



17869

10204

收容所 Camp	爪哇 17-11-13 昭17年11月13日	番 號 No.	6169/147 4204
姓 名 Name	FILLMORE, DEAN JASON LEWITT <del>...</del> ...	生年月日 Date of Birth	1926-1-21
國 籍 Nationality	✳	所 屬 部 隊 Unit	20914075 A 2ND BN., 131st FA.
階級身分 Rank	CORPORAL 伍長 伍長 伍長	捕獲年月日 Date of Capture	17-3-8 昭和 年 月 日
捕獲場所 Place of Capture	JAVA 爪哇	母 名 Mother's Name	FILLMORE, ANITAINE
父 名 Father's Name	FILLMORE, HOLLIS S.	職 業 Occupation	SILENT (AGRICULTURE) 農林學生
本籍地 Place of Origin	LEWITT, IOWA, U.S.A.	特記事項 Remark	
通報先 Destination of Report	S.R. H.S. FILLMORE SPAWLER, TEXAS, U.S.A.		

15



補修欄 Other Informations

1942年10月10日 泰國へ移管

1 月10日 泰俘虜收容所第5分所へ

昭和19年11月26日 泰俘虜收容所第5分所へ

泰俘虜收容所第三分所ヨリ昭和19年7月26日 七〇へ移管

泰俘虜收容所第7分所ヨリ昭和20年1月21日 4分所へ移管

昭和20年8月29日 正式引渡済

10-10-42 - transferred from JAVA POW camp to THAILAND

10-10-42 - taken on strength of THAILAND POW branch camp No. 5

26-11-43 - taken on strength of THAILAND POW branch camp No. 3

21-7-44 - transferred from THAILAND POW branch camp No. 3 to No. 7

21-1-45 - transferred from THAILAND POW branch camp No. 7 to No. 4

29-8-45 - formally handed over

Handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom of the table, including the number 20243205.

補修欄 Other Informations

八五 俘虜收容所 ヨリ 昭和17年10月29日 泰國へ移管1隻 出発

112277-~~112277~~ R.A.A. Lt. Col. G. A. H. EACHERN

昭和20年8月29日 (聯合軍) = 31泊入

補修欄 Other Informations

爪哇 俘虜收容所 昭和三十七年 月 日 泰國へ移管

Fillmore Benjamin D ZOEHLING  
26 Sep 45 445

DATE IN  
DATE  
201310 1175

WAR DEPARTMENT  
The Adjutant General's Office  
Washington, D. C.

MISSING STATUS DIRECTION

Pursuant to Section 5 of Public Law 490, 77th Congress, as amended, and following a full review of all available information, upon direction and delegation by the Secretary of War, the Chief, Casualty Branch, A. G. O. this 24th day of February 1943 finds Corporal Benjamin D. Fillmore, 20,814,095, Field Artillery,

who was officially reported as missing ( in action ) as of the 24th day of February 1942, in Java at the time of final capitulation,

to be reasonably presumed to be living, and directs that he be continued in the status of missing ( in action ) as provided by law.

By order of the Secretary of War:

LOUIS LIPPMAN,  
Adjutant General

*LR*

Distribution:

- Office of Dependency Benefits \_\_\_\_\_
- Chief of Finance \_\_\_\_\_
- Casualty Branch \_\_\_\_\_
- Record Copy: Enl Br , Off Br   
S.G.O. Nurses \_\_\_\_\_



*in Enl. Br  
2-24-43  
Flynn 3069*

WAR DEPARTMENT  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

—BATTLE CASUALTY REPORT

AG 201	NAME FILLMORE BENJAMIN D ASN 20 814 095	GRADE CPL SCM	DATE CAS. REPORT RECEIVED
NAME AND ADDRESS OF E. A.	DOCTOR ROLLIN S FILLMORE JACKBORO TEXAS		DATE TELEGRAM SENT 4 SEPTEMBER 1945

THE INDIVIDUAL NAMED BELOW DESIGNATED THE ABOVE PERSON AS THE ONE TO BE NOTIFIED IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, AND THE OFFICIAL TELEGRAPHIC AND LETTER NOTIFICATIONS WILL BE SENT TO THIS PERSON, THE RELATIONSHIP, IF ANY, IS SHOWN BELOW. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS PERSON IS NOT NECESSARILY THE NEXT-OF-KIN OR RELATIVE DESIGNATED TO BE PAID SIX MONTHS' PAY GRATUITY IN CASE OF DEATH.

THE SECRETARY OF WAR HAS ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR

GRADE	NAME	SERIAL NUMBER	ARM OR SERVICE	REPORTING THEATRE	F OR J STATUS	SHIPMENT NUMBER
CPL	FILLMORE, BENJAMIN D.	20814015		IBT		24802 4X-U-5
TYPE OF CASUALTY		PLACE OF CASUALTY		DATE OF CASUALTY		CASUALTY CODE
RETURNED TO MILITARY CONTROL				DAY	MONTH	YEAR
				30	AUG	45

REPORT FURTHER STATES THAT HE IS HOSPITALIZED PHYSICAL CONDITION GOOD

EDWARD F MITCHELL  
MAJOR GENERAL

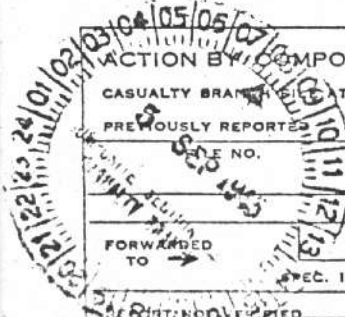
ACTING THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE ARMY

OFFICIAL: *[Signature]* ADJUTANT GENERAL

REMARKS: AG 704 31 AUG 45

CORRECTED COPY

NEW DELHI. CRA 26198. RELEASED FROM POW CAMP. NOW IN 142 GEN HOSP IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION. SINGASARI, JAVA.



*filed*

ACTION BY COMPOSITE SECTION: REPORT VERIFIED \_\_\_\_\_ FORM 43 \_\_\_\_\_ AG 201 REQ \_\_\_\_\_

CASUALTY BRANCH ATTACHED \_\_\_\_\_ OR CHARGED TO \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ (AS INDICATED BELOW):

FILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ MESSAGE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE AND AREA: \_\_\_\_\_ E. A. NOTIFIED \_\_\_\_\_

FORWARDED TO \_\_\_\_\_

SPEC. IDEN.  C. & P.  TELEGRAM  LETTER  CERTIF.  F. REL.  CORRES.  REPAT.  S. R. & D.  NON-DEL.

NO FORM 43 \_\_\_\_\_ NO CAS. BR. FILE \_\_\_\_\_ CHECKED BY \_\_\_\_\_ REVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRIBUTION "A" \_\_\_\_\_ COPIES \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRIBUTION "B" \_\_\_\_\_ COPIES \_\_\_\_\_

NOV 17 1945  
11009

NOV 6 1945

ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
Army Ground and Service Forces  
Redistribution Station  
MEDICAL BRANCH  
Hot Springs, Arkansas

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_

SUBJECT: Physical Condition of \_\_\_\_\_

TO: Commanding Officer, Army Service Forces, AG & SF Redis. Sta.,  
Hot Springs, Arkansas.

	P	U	L	H	R	S	X	R	T	D
Original Profile	3	1	3	1	1	1	✓			✓
Revised Profile										

Height \_\_\_\_\_ In. Weight \_\_\_\_\_ lbs.

1. See paragraph 2i, Circular No. 134, War Department, 1944, and paragraph 9c, Memorandum No. WAC-44, 12 May 1944, concerning notations of the above on W.D., A.G.C. Forms Nos. 20 and 24.

\* Physical defects which require special consideration in assignment are described as follows (non-tactical terms).

Recommendations of Chief Medical Examiner

*Pain both legs.*

*Malaria*

*Reduced stamina*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*[Signature]*  
Medical Examiner

# REPORT OF PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF ENLISTED PERSONNEL PRIOR TO DISCHARGE, RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY OR RETIREMENT

1. Last name—First name—Middle initial	2. Army Serial Number	3. Grade	4. Regiment, arm or service
5. Permanent mailing address	6. Color	7. Age in years	8. Sex
FILLMORE BENJAMIN D BOX 24C2 COLLEGE STATION, TEX	30 314 C95 SGT AAF F W 5-7 W	26	M
			9. Syphilis Register
			In S/R? Yes or No
			Closed in S/R? Yes or No
			NO

## STATEMENT AND MEDICAL HISTORY OF EXAMINEE

10. At the present time do you have any wound, injury or disease which is disabling? If answer is yes, list those conditions first under Item 11.				Yes or No Yes
11. List all significant diseases, wounds, and injuries. State circumstances under which wounds or injuries were incurred and date of onset. Answer yes or no in Columns 1 to 4. (Continue on back if necessary) <b>No history of syphilis.</b>				
				1 EPTS 2*
				2 AMS 3*
				3 IMS 4*
				4 PD 5*
1. Malnutrition with avitaminosis as a POW-8 wks 42 17 Aug 1945-Java-dysentery at same time & tropical ulcer left tibia-2 mo hosp.				1. No 2. No
2. Malaria continuously as POW-last attack 3 wks ago				Yes Yes

## RECORD OF PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

12. Teeth—Indicate restorable carious teeth by O, non-restorable carious teeth by /, missing natural teeth by X, teeth replaced by denture, horizontal line over X, as XXX and teeth replaced by fixed bridge, oval to include abutments, as (4 5)												13. Mouth and gum abnormalities																																																																		
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">RIGHT</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">EXAMINEE'S</th> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">LEFT</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 1.5%;">8</td><td style="width: 1.5%;">7</td><td style="width: 1.5%;">6</td><td style="width: 1.5%;">5</td><td style="width: 1.5%;">4</td><td style="width: 1.5%;">3</td><td style="width: 1.5%;">2</td><td style="width: 1.5%;">1</td> <td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td><td style="width: 1.5%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td><td>15</td><td>14</td><td>13</td><td>12</td><td>11</td><td>10</td><td>9</td> <td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>												RIGHT						EXAMINEE'S						LEFT						8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1															16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16								None			
RIGHT						EXAMINEE'S						LEFT																																																																		
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1																																																																							
16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16																																																															
15. Skin Ulcer scar lt leg 3cm diam. well healed.												16. Genito-Urinary (And pelvic for women)																																																																		
18. Varicose veins												19. Hernia																																																																		
21. Musculoskeletal defects												22. Feet																																																																		
24. Cardiovascular system												25. Blood pressure																																																																		
Normal												Systolic				Diastolic																																																														
												112				68																																																														
27. Lungs												28. Chest X-ray																																																																		
31. Neurological diagnosis												32. Psychiatric diagnosis																																																																		
34. Eye abnormalities												35. Uncorrected — Vision — Corrected																																																																		
None												Right eye		Left eye		Right eye		Left eye																																																												
												20/20		20/20		20/20		20/20																																																												
37. Ear, nose, throat, abnormalities												38. Hearing (Whispered voice)																																																																		
None												Right ear				Left ear																																																														
												15				15 /15																																																														
40. In your opinion will wound, injury or disease result in:				Disability?		Untimely death?		41. In your opinion was wound, injury, or disease incurred in line of duty?				42. In your opinion does individual meet physical and mental standards for discharge?		Yes or No																																																																
Condition				Yes or No		Yes or No		Condition:				Yes or No		Yes																																																																
par 11				1 No		2 Yes		par 11				Yes																																																																		
43. Remarks, special tests, or other defects (Continue on back)																																																																														
44. Date of examination				45. Location				46. Typed name and grade				47. Signature																																																																		
16 Feb 46-Cp				Fannin Tex				A R WICHMAN 1st Lt MC				<i>A R Wichman</i>																																																																		



REPORT OF DISABILITY FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES

1. Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial	ASN	Date entry active service, if known
Fillmore	Benjamin	D.	20814095	24 Nov 40

2. Full name and address of hospital making this report:

WALTER REED GENERAL HOSPITAL. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER. WASHINGTON 12, D.C.

3. Date and place individual first came under continuous hospital treatment for present disability.

Date entered

29 Aug 45

Full name and address of hospital

142nd Conv Hosp., Calcutta, India

4. If any previous hospitalization pertains to present disability and is not included in above record of continuous hospital treatment, give places and dates of admission and discharge, if available.

Date entered	Date discharged	Full name and address of hospital
Liberated POW of the Japanese.		Interned from 8 Mar 42 to 29 Aug 45

5. DIAGNOSIS: (Major condition or conditions causing disability)(State main procedure supporting diagnosis, e.g., X-ray, E.K.G., etc.):

1. Malnutrition, severe, result of inadequate diet while POW.
2. Malaria, recurrent, history of.
3. Beri-beri, pellagra, dysentery, history of.
4. Tropical ulcer, left leg.
5. Severely beaten by Jap and Korean guards.
6. Injury to back, history of; when patient was caught in a cave-in of rocks.

6. PROGNOSIS: (estimated further period of hospital care):

Undetermined.

7. Brief statement of how disability occurred, with special reference to enemy action, misconduct (when so found by an Investigation Officer), AWOL? actual performance of official duties, or while on leave.

Disability result of enemy actions.

Date 31 Oct 45  
Form SG 700  
28 March 1944

Certified By Edward P. Dickinson  
Major, FD  
Insurance Officer

